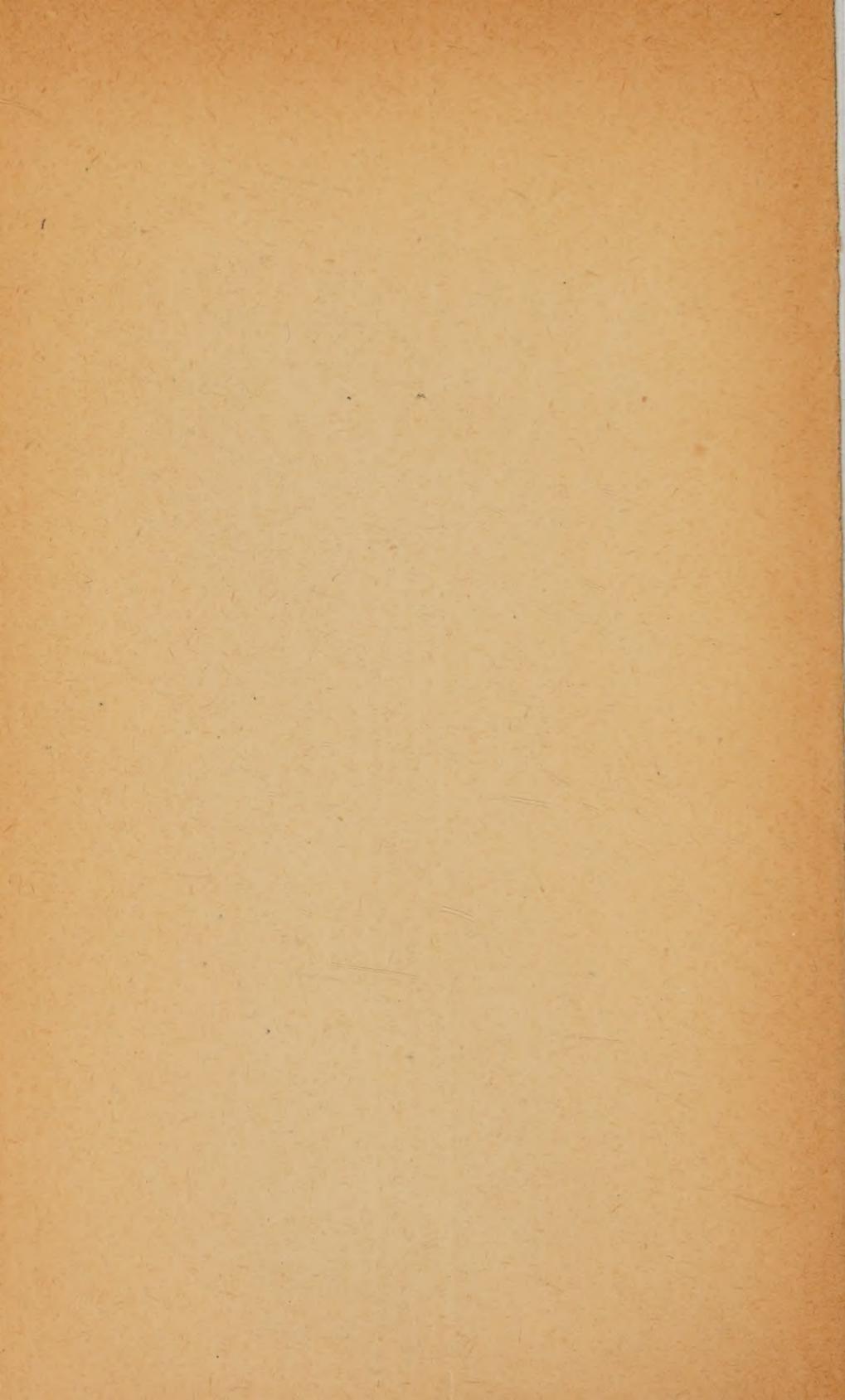


# PENGUIN MUSIC MAGAZINE

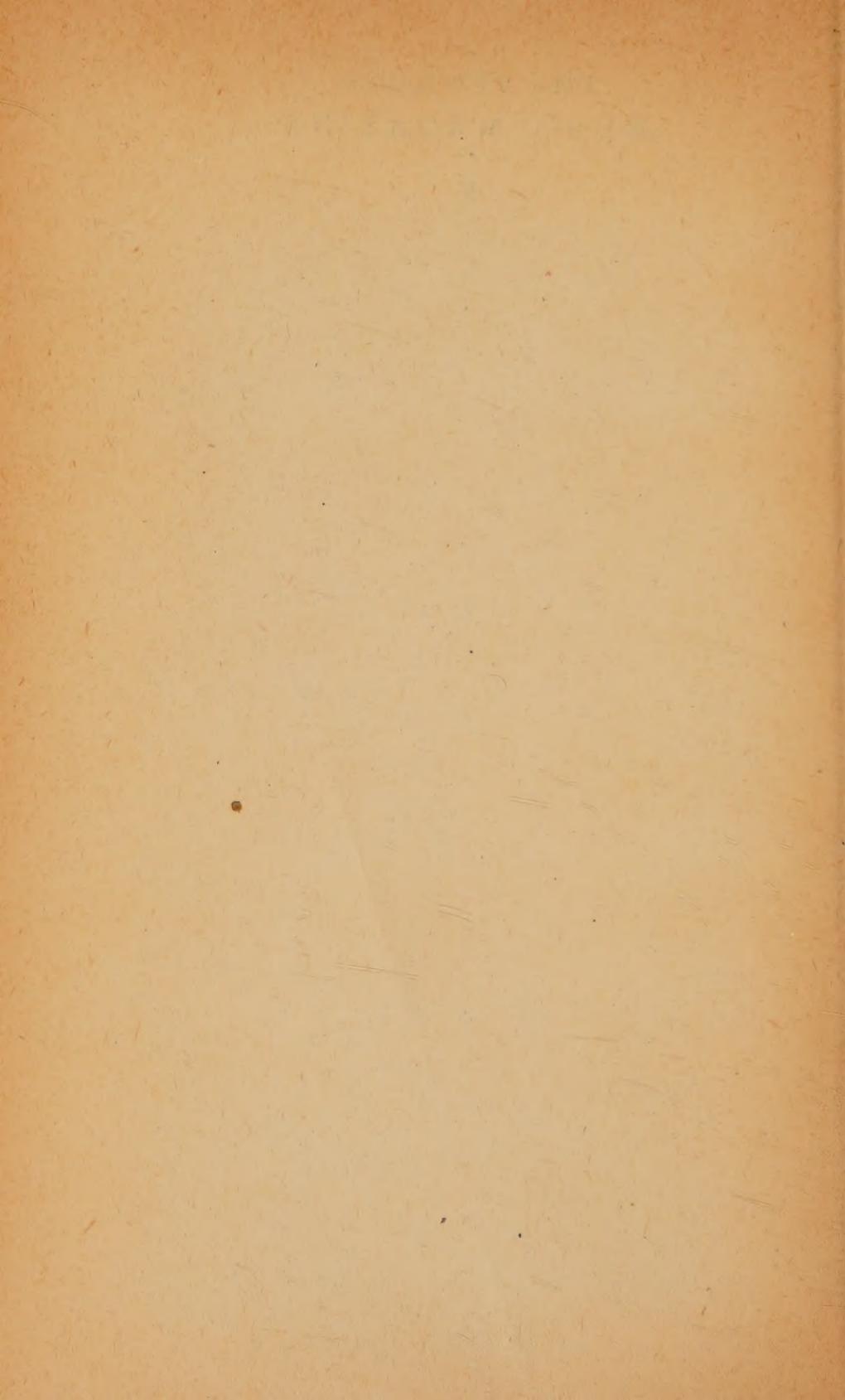


ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE



THE PENGUIN  
MUSIC MAGAZINE

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THE PENGUIN  
MUSIC  
MAGAZINE

*Edited by*

RALPH HILL

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# THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS

RALPH HILL



## MUNICIPAL MUSIC

THE outstanding success of the many festivals given in Britain last year was the third annual Cheltenham Music Festival. We are very pleased to publish, on page 33, Frank Howes's admirable speech, which he delivered at the public lunch celebrating the opening of the Festival. It must be said that a large measure of its success was due to the really wonderful co-operation of the Hallé Orchestra and its conductor, John Barbirolli.

I was glad to see that C. B. Rees devoted the whole of one of his lively and voluble commentaries on musical personalities and events in *The Music Teacher* to this Festival. He rightly paid high tribute to the Cheltenham Corporation for its cultural enterprise. Let me quote his words: "The third annual festival was an even greater success than its predecessors, and when I say this, I do not mean that it filled the coffers of the far-sighted Corporation with gold. It is not the main object of the Cheltenham city fathers to make money out of music, but rather to provide music under ideal conditions. The Mayor of Cheltenham told me that they were not motivated by box-office considerations, and that it was 'the policy of the festival' to do what seemed right and necessary and dignified artistically—and to meet the bill afterwards. Admirable sentiments, and admirably substantiated in practice. . . . I have no doubt at all that, after three years, this Festival at Cheltenham has come to stay, and to expand artistically and financially too. It is a pleasure to pay sincere tribute to the Cheltenham Municipality for what it has done for music and for what it intends to do. So often one encounters a niggardly attitude by Councils towards the arts even in these days—an attitude conditioned

exclusively by monetary notions—that it is as refreshing as it is encouraging to know that it is possible (and exciting) to put music first."

How true! In no other country does music have to suffer so much from the interference and control of philistines and unqualified bureaucrats as in Britain. Think, for example, of the Brighton Corporation and its recent treatment of the Brighton Philharmonic Society, which controls the Southern Philharmonic Orchestra. This excellent orchestra's programmes given at the Dome compared favourably last season, both in quality and enterprise, with those of the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and the Hallé.

Towards the end of the winter season the Brighton Town Council decided to cut their guarantee against loss by the Brighton Philharmonic Society from £3,000 (a paltry sum in any case) to £2,000. One councillor said that to him "and the majority of Brighton people" the music of Stravinsky and "other composers with high-sounding names" was "a series of squeaks and squawks. . . . The reason the Society wants this money is because it is a complete, utter, miserable flop." A second councillor said: "If this good music cannot stand on its own merits, then it is time this good music stopped."

It is hardly necessary to point out that by these statements both councillors stand condemned as men without taste or discernment. It is one of the weaknesses of our system of local government that the successful butcher, baker, and candlestick maker are so frequently given the power to make decisions on matters of the mind and the spirit which are beyond their understanding and experience. That municipal music, architecture, education, or what you will, should be treated in terms of selling haberdashery or butcher's meat is a disgrace.

Incidentally, another Brighton councillor runs, on behalf of the Council, a highly successful variety show called "Tuesday at the Dome," which is described as "anti-classic," whatever that may mean. This show makes a large annual profit. It may shock the Brighton Town Council to learn that some enlightened corporations and councils utilise the handsome profits made from

public dances and other popular entertainments to subsidise cultural projects, such as concerts, which may in the initial period show a loss.

Of course, there are many Corporations and Councils in England which entirely ignore the claims for municipal music. There are others (Wolverhampton, Sheffield, Bournemouth, Guildford, Walthamstow, Hornsey, Wembley, and Croydon, for example) which have the intelligence (unlike Brighton) to realise the importance of doing what seems "right and necessary and dignified artistically."

To those councillors who are beginning to realise that the provision of music, as well as other cultural activities, is one of the responsibilities of every Council or Corporation, in the same sense as other accepted responsibilities, such as health, housing, and education, I commend to their notice the excellent and instructive booklet, *Music and the Borough Councillor*. It is a report addressed to Borough Councillors in the Greater London area, published by the Music Development Committee of the Musicians' Union (London Branch).

The Musicians' Union (London Branch) appointed a Music Development Committee to investigate the musical position in sixty-seven Boroughs in the Greater London area. It also commissioned the British Institute of Public Opinion to conduct a Gallup poll through these Boroughs. Space will not permit a complete summary of the Committee's findings published in the booklet; but here are three salient pointers: (1) three out of four persons interviewed in the Gallup poll want their Councils to run their own concerts as well as dances; (2) more than half the persons interviewed stated that they would not mind if a little money was lost in running concerts; (3) nearly three out of four persons chose light music or symphonic music when asked which type of concert they would prefer. Only 14 per cent chose dance music and jazz.

#### MR. RUSSELL WRIGGLES

Thomas Russell has written a pamphlet aptly entitled *Words and Music: An Orchestra replies to a Critic*. The orchestra is the London Philharmonic, the critic is myself, and the reply is

concerned with my comments on the L.P.O. in *Penguin Music Magazine* No. 2. The most sensible and skilful part of the whole pamphlet is its cover, which reproduces a humorous drawing of a couple of orchestral musicians beating up a critic, by Diana John. It is published by the L.P.O. at 6d.

Mr. Russell's attempt to confuse the main issues in order to extricate himself and his orchestra from the uncomfortable position in which they find themselves is as pathetic as it is comical. Mr. Russell's frantic wriggling will deceive nobody, except perhaps the very naïve and very ignorant.

Mr. Russell considers that my case against the L.P.O. as stated in No. 2 is built on a "shaky foundation" because my first premise was a "second-hand report . . . an anonymous quotation from a Dublin newspaper." The paper, as I stated, was the *Dublin Times*, which is Eire's leading newspaper. The quotation came from a *first-hand* report by its able and responsible music critic, which merely confirmed some of my own experiences and observations of the L.P.O. and its methods.

I said above that Mr. Russell attempts to confuse the main issues. Here is a typical example. I took the L.P.O. to task for not including any British music in its series of popular concerts sponsored by the L.C.C. at Finsbury Park. Mr. Russell said that the audiences no more wanted to hear such music than they wanted to read the prose of James Joyce and Gertrude Stein. I then gave a list of suitable popular British works, and asked him what they had in common with the prose of Joyce and Stein. His answer was that some of these works had been performed all over the country and at children's concerts, and many other modern works had been performed at the L.P.O.'s (show-case) concerts at Covent Garden (usually once, by the way, and once only). This is all very interesting, but what has it to do with Joyce and Stein and with the popular concerts at Finsbury Park? It reads to me like a Marx Brothers' explanation.

Mr. Russell's reverence for the L.P.O. has become an obsession. He solemnly tells us that to the Arts Council, the British Council, and the Foreign Office he has expressed his considered opinion that the Hallé and the L.P.O. are the two orchestras which really

represent this country! From this we may assume that the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (to mention three London orchestras only) are *unrepresentative* of this country and therefore inferior to the L.P.O.!

Mr. Russell objects to what he calls my "eternal comparisons." Surely the comparative method must be the basis of all balanced criticism? It is by comparing the standards of performance of the L.P.O. with the Hallé, the L.S.O., the Philharmonia Orchestra, and other combinations that we know Mr. Russell is talking nonsense.

Anyway, I am not so much concerned with the actual standard of the L.P.O.'s performances, but with the artistic policy of the orchestra. I attacked a certain aspect of this policy, but in Mr. Russell's reply he avoids the main issues and thus shows the weakness of his case.

It is a pity Mr. Russell saw fit to become personal in his counter-attack in the hope of discrediting his opponent. Such contemptible manœuvres would not be worth mentioning, except for one mischievous insinuation that deserves to be refuted. Referring to my article in No. 2, he says: "Quite gratuitously . . . he pulls down the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, which as recently as Mr. Hill's own connection with the B.B.C. was regularly presented as an excellent combination." The insinuation is, of course, that I change my colour according to my master!

However, the facts speak for themselves. During the six years that I contributed a weekly music article to the *Radio Times*, I never once wrote about the B.B.C. Orchestra as an orchestra, although on one or two occasions I praised the system that made it possible to employ a permanent orchestra consisting of some of the finest players in the country. To say that I "regularly presented" it "as an excellent combination" is untrue. There was no necessity for such presentation; its excellence was a universally acknowledged fact.

I left the service of the B.B.C. in the autumn of 1945, and about two months later a considerable number of the orchestra's finest players resigned, and a few further resignations followed on. No

longer was it, in my opinion, a *great* orchestra, and I have since said so on several occasions.

*Evil be to those who evil think!*

### GRAMOPHONE REVIEWS

Readers will be disappointed to hear that owing to pressure of work Alec Robertson has decided to give up writing gramophone reviews for *Penguin Music Magazine*, at least for the time being.

As the gramophone companies are good enough to send me their new records for review and as I possess a Decola, which is a first-class radiogram, I have reluctantly decided to enter the field of gramophone criticism.

I use the adverb "reluctantly," because (a) Mr. Robertson is so much better informed about gramophone records than I am, and (b) because I consider that gramophone criticism is the least accurate and the most wayward of all branches, or tributaries, of music criticism. It is inaccurate and wayward, simply because of the varying character of the reproducing instrument, which stands between the listener and the performers. The gramophone is yet another remove from the composer's original conception. If we all used exactly the same instrument, we should all hear (assuming, of course, the existence of the "normal" ear, which we must assume in all music criticism) precisely the same sounds and quality of sound as we do in the concert hall. But unfortunately we don't.

### BRAINS TRUST

While on the subject of editorial features, I would like to see many more questions sent in by readers for Julian Herbage's "Brains Trust." This feature is at your service, but please remember that your questions must not be of such a kind that you can easily discover the answers for yourself from an ordinary musical dictionary.

\*

Acknowledgment is due to The Bureau of Current Affairs for permission to reproduce the drawing of Lionel Tertis, and to the Nonesuch Press for the page from Peter Warlock's *Songs of the Gardens*.

# ROMANCE OF MUSIC PRINTING

HUBERT FOSS



PRINTING is always left to printers. It is a technical job, admittedly, but so are others. Enthusiastic amateurs will mend (and even make) wireless sets, electric bells, and motor-cars; many a father will knock up a shelf or a cabinet, and talk in *expertise* about the early peas or the late leeks (or what) on his allotment. The time must now amount to days that I have had to spend looking at the snapshot albums of the family, the "home-cinema," and the local amateur dramatic society, all produced by incredibly well-informed amateurs. But in printing, even among professional authors, it is a rarity to find one in a thousand who has a clear idea of how his words are produced in desirable quantity for his public; they do not know even the technical processes, and as for the art of printing, they leave that to the few technicians. Among composers, the percentage rate is even lower. I should say one in a million (if there are a million composers).

Yet it would seem that it would ease both composer's and printer's tasks if the more musical of the pair were to consider the professional job of the more technical. Less mistakes would be made, and the voyage of the musical boat from manuscript to print would be eased by the dredging of channels, by light-ships, harbour-bars, and good charting, as well as by the usual wireless reports about the weather. Your Editor asks me to explain what happens. To the best of my ability I will. But, as I am not starting a school of music printing, I can enter into no correspondence (and all that, etc.).

A printed page is a recurrent series of (we try to make them) exactly similar marks in ink on paper. There are three ways in common use of making such marks in an abundance of repetition.

The first is to prepare a printing surface which is raised above the rest of the solid material. Cut away from a block of wood or steel the unnecessary parts, and leave an **A**: the ink will go on the surface, and make an impression on the paper. This is the way nearly all ordinary books (including catalogues and time-tables and forms) are printed. We call it **LETTERPRESS**.

The second way is that of the flat surface which meets the paper on an exact level, all over. The principle here is the mutual antagonism of oil and water: the ink is oily and greasy, the surface is porous and water-absorbing, so that only the ink appears on the plate. Nearly all music is printed by this process and nearly all the pictorial posters to be seen on the tube walls and hoardings. We call it **LITHOGRAPHY**.

The third process is that of cutting or chemically biting an indentation into a firm surface like metal, and then filling that canal with sticky ink, which, when the flat part of the metal is wiped clean, will stick to the textile surface of the paper. The etcher uses this method, and, by mechanical ingenuity, it is used for many picture papers, from *Everybody's* and *Illustrated* to the "supers," and also for the illustrations in this *Penguin Music Magazine*. We call it **INTAGLIO**, and also photogravure, and other technical names.

From the very earliest days of printing—in the 1450's, for example—men wanted to duplicate music, and used the new printing system that Caxton introduced for their purpose. (It is ironical that to-day, in the hey-day of the printing machine, the "copyist" should have come back into his own!) All three methods of printing surfaces have been used, and still are, in presenting musical notation to our eyes; and examples are given in the picture pages. Fascinating as the subject of word-printing is, I submit that in music-printing there are two special problems that have never been sufficiently thought of by our learned typographers and designers.

The first concerns the stave of five lines, across which the notes have to rest. Now, anyone who has done any handwork—in wood, or metal, or even plastics—or even seen any, knows that the joining of two *raised* surfaces is difficult, save by mitring or

welding, or dovetailing; and in whatever technique, joined angles are always the weakest members of a stress-structure. It is by far easier to connect canals than embankments, to divert rivers than to add to mountains.

The second problem is quite different. A musical score is not intended, first of all, to be read for enjoyment in a chair. It is a series of instructions to a conductor: each orchestral part is a "movement order" for a member of the orchestral army. He has, so to speak, his gun in his hand and cannot, therefore, take his routine sheet on his knees. Two subsidiary points emerge: (a) the player (and conductor) will read the printed page at a greater distance from the eye than that adopted by the reader in bed (or in the tube, or office); (b) accuracy is more important in music than in a book. Every note must be very exactly placed, vertically and laterally: hence the stave. If I print here "absent," everyone reads it as "absent" and blames me for a fool. But if I print A for E in a score and a part, then the music comes wrongly to you, and thousands of others, for years. And if the parts cannot be seen at trombone distance, then we may as well (as they say) "pack up."

As the picture pages show, many efforts have been made, throughout the nearly five hundred years of the march of printing, to overcome this problem of the crossing lines. The earliest try was to take a block of wood and to cut out the lines and notes and stems, all in one piece. Then those pioneers of "movable type"—Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde and their followers and associates—came upon the idea that, by a kind of jig-saw puzzle arrangement, music might be set up in movable type. In the page I have reproduced from Playford's *Harmonia Sacra* you will see this movable type in being, with all its rough joins and gaps. Turn to the page from *The English Hymnal*, and you will see a page of music set in a similar way about 1907—there is still some hand-setting to-day. Clumsy though the process is, it has its convenience. An expert writes that "a bar of eight consecutive notes in 3/4 time, and with a tenor clef, contains at least 78 characters" (i.e. individual pieces of type), and more if the measure is complicated.

Both the wood engraving and the hand-set page are printed

letterpress, which explains why the latter is so often used for hymn-books. So, too, would be the lovely hand-set music on the third page of the illustrations—a type of nearly three hundred years' antiquity which exists in its original, and is still cast, to-day.

A second method of leaping the five-barred gate is shown, too—the way of hand-writing. That way has, in our times, become more familiar because of the entry of the camera into the field of printing. The camera has made great differences in the practice of music-printers. Yet fundamentally the problems remain the same.

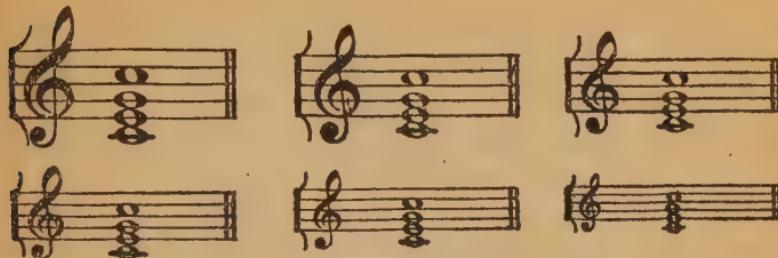
The normal process in use to-day for reproducing in many copies the original manuscript of a composer is that of engraving—that is to say, of overcoming the need to leap the gate by burrowing under it! Engraving is, to some extent, a free-hand method: it is, in its entirety, graphic—and music is so fluid a medium that it needs a pictorial technique even to represent it in instructional form to the eye. A good example of how illustrative the engraver can be is shown on the page where the engraver adorned his score of military calls and orders by pictures of the men acting upon them. He used the same tools—cutters and gravers—for the music and the figures.

It would seem that the best way of explaining this modern, but also ancient, process of engraving music for reproduction in printed copies would be to follow the progress of a manuscript from the composer's room and the publisher's post-clerk to the printing office and back to the publisher's warehouse.

Not every composer writes legibly, or even accurately. Some of them write fluently and can make what they mean intelligible to those of us who are used to reading MS. scores. But few in our previous suppositious million have any knowledge of what we call "printer's style"—that is to say, they do not bother about stems up or down, or spacing, or the odd tricks with accidentals in various octaves of a spaced chord, or the hundred-and-one other tricks of the trade that make a polite-mannered score in print.

The publisher agrees to publish, and may even go so far as to suggest a "style" for the final exterior of the work. He has a small area of variation for his choice of "style." On the third page I repro-

duce an uncommon design of punches. There are about two other designs, neither easily accessible. Otherwise, all punches are substantially the same in design, and only different in size. Here is an illustration of the same chord in six different sizes.



The manuscript reaches the engravers (you can see them at work on the first page of the illustrations). They are highly skilled, with seven years of apprenticeship behind them; and they are probably the smallest trade union in the world—under forty members, and unwilling to expand their numbers. New apprentices are not admitted at present, and have not been for years.

The first job of the engraver's foreman is to "cast up" his MS.—to calculate how many symbols to the line, allowing for the syllables and spelling of a song's words, the semi- and demi-semi-quavers, the accidentals, and so on—so as to get the spacing even. Then the working engraver has a look at the MS. and sees what is afoot. He takes a plate, of soft pewter, and roughly marks out where his staves will occur, vertically. The proper spacing he has to calculate by the number of leger lines above the highest and below the lowest staves, with due allowance (in a score or a song, for example) for the middle lines or the words. Calculations done and positions marked, he cuts his stave lines with a five-point graver (of exact dimensions), poised by the sure hand of experience against a precision rule of metal. (For some sense of what I mean, look at the string-quartet score on the fourth page of the pictures.)

He then proceeds to scratch in the music, with a pin-point-like impression on the metal surface, for exact spacing, both lateral and vertical. But, it is important to realise, the engraver has to work *backwards*—that is, from right to left, with the music

mirror-like, and so difficult to read. It is at this point that he corrects the composer's somewhat wayward "printers' style"—altering his up and down tails, and so on, as need be.

The sketch completed, the engraver punches in the note-heads, with holograph (or single) punches, taken from an upright case before him. He poises the punch at the right place (it must be *exactly* the right place!) and taps the butt-end with a small hammer. The punch (or "die") goes into the pewter plate about one-sixty-fourth of an inch. When all the note-heads are in, he cuts the stems and bar-lines and other upright lines with a steel graver, running it against the metal rule.

All this throws up a certain amount of metal ribbon and that must be cleared away. Various polishing actions are done—and other things, but this is only a "scratch-in" description. Corrections: if there is an error or a composer's alteration on the proof, the engraver turns the plate over on its face, on a flat and sympathetic surface, having marked with callipers (his favourite tool at all stages, especially in the early spacing!) the proper point on the back of the plate; then he hammers the soft plate flat at this point, and re-engraves the front of it as required.

So much for the production of the plate—the "original," as we call it: that has to be made available in hundreds or thousands. To-day we usually print music by flat process—that is, lithography. We produce a zinc "printing plate" photographically from a clean (a very clean!) proof, clean it further with brush-work, and then "work" it on a flat-surface machine. But we mostly print the actual surface on to a piece of prepared rubber on to the paper. We call that "offset litho."

I can well imagine that if I were to read so inadequate an account of the very complicated processes of music printing, I should feel like writing to the author to say, "You left out this and that." I have, and the other, too. But here is some of it, right as far as it goes, and it goes farther than some composers know. Let me say in conclusion that I admire the engravers for their patience and their astonishing accuracy, and for the way they keep all of us musicians on the straight path of "printers' style," or as I prefer it, "printers' practice"—an honourable and historic tradition!

# THE VOICE RACKET

JULIAN KIMBELL



THIS seems to be the season for enquiring into vice rackets. How about an enquiry into the voice racket? Voice racket? Yes, for never in the history of the singing world has there been such an unbridled exploitation of voices, or such a market for fustian stock. In considering the reasons for the deterioration of singing to-day, it is therefore essential to see if it is the inevitable aftermath of these grievous times; whether it has been brought about by influences outside the singer's control, or is due to a lack in the singers themselves. There will always be those who say things are not as they were—they never were, of course!—but the gramophone records give us unquestionable proofs of the superiority of the old-time singers over those of to-day, quite apart from the authority of those who had the privilege of hearing them in the flesh. They knew their job from A to Z. They had to, for there were in those days no microphones to magnify virtues or conceal personal oddities.

The modern musician may scoff at the kind of music the earliest singers had to perform, but the modern singer should thank his lucky stars that some of these same operas are to-day out-moded. For they pinned the performer mercilessly down to their needs. There were no bizarre orchestral effects to bolster up a singer's wavering mechanism, or distract the mind of the listener. The old composers packed their scores with vocal effects that would make a modern singer's hair stand on end. There was much strutting, it is true; there were trivialities and extravagances; but the singers touched at times astonishing levels of performance. Came Rossini and Donizetti to let into the old-fashioned scene shafts of brilliant sunshine. With fine eyes for contrasts, they deepened the shadows as well, and in lighter vein gave their singers music that tripped so delicately that the ear seemed almost to be deceived by the

quickness of the tongue. It was not a far cry to Verdi and Puccini, with their still more impassioned oratory. Long streaming phrases and pealing high notes were demanded of the singers, and challenges put out to participate in ever more daring climaxes. How well they were met, we all know. How was it done?

In normal life one turns to new inventions and labour-saving devices to make life easier. The singer cannot tinker with his larynx or improve the output of his bellows, in order to earn a lazy livelihood. He must therefore fling back retrospective eyes in order to bring the present up-to-date, and see when and where he lost touch with basic principles. Some historical research is necessary, to see why the Italian singers have been so far superior to our own. The secret of the alternating intensity and effervescence of spirit in the Latin character is partly due to climatic conditions, but it has also to do with its particular ancestry. The tapestry of Italian history is scored with bloody fingers, and studded with dramatic events. Down the winding corridors of time, vicious, heroic, and tragic figures passed in bewildering succession, and the echoes of their footsteps seem to linger still. To bring them to life and fuse them afresh in the operatic workshop was just such a task as the veristic composers revelled in. For they were skilled artificers. They knew just how to swing the hammers in order to make the sparks fly and the anvil ring.

In the opera house we become the slaves of fancy, and this not exactly an elevating fancy. We may be more discerning in our tastes than our forefathers, but deep down in us lie the same sanguinary instincts that sent the Italians crowding to the cutting-up of the Cenci, and the French to make the execution of the Marquise de Brinvilliers the occasion for a public holiday. Tyburn used to be the most popular spot in London, when hangings and quarterings were the fashion. We have not seen fit to immortalise such happenings to the same extent as our neighbours, although I am sure the English were not a whit better than their Italian prototypes. They were probably worse, but it has been the habit of our historians to play down the characters of our criminals or shelter them under a veil of sanctimony. Think of Guy Fawkes, Jonathan Wild, Titus Oates, and so on, as inspirations for dramatic

composition or for operatic emulation. They were quite good criminals in their way, one may be sure, but their villainy lacked a proper dramatic tang. The *Beggar's Opera* roughly epitomises our operatic endowment. Perhaps, then, this lack of colour accounted for the long, bleak periods in our musical history and left us wandering rather aimlessly, before being gently led by Gilbert and Sullivan into the pleasant byways. What a pity Webster and Marlowe did not bend their elaborate minds to the study of music instead of letters! We could have spared a few dramatists for a full-blooded composer.

Probably the two finest singers produced in these islands were Sims Reeves and Santley, who by all accounts vied with the Italians on their own ground. So one can only assume that they must have been revitalised by the Mediterranean warmth and the singing of strings of solfeggi. In other words, they had to be Italianised before they became great singers. McCormack, Hislop, and Burke also shed their coats, and held the standard high aloft. Did we follow where they led? No. Instead we strove to found a native art made up of an amalgam of much mind and little matter. It was said that words were being sacrificed and swallowed up in a welter of tone. That of course sounded reasonable enough, but it should have been recognised that, as surely as there is something wrong with a fine voice if the words cannot consistently be heard, so do well-made words fail of their object if they are not welded to a tautly strung singing line. It may not be amiss here to quote Bacon on what he calls "delicate learning": "Men began to hunt more after words than matter, and more after the choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clear composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses, and the varying the illustration of their works with tropes and figures, than after the weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention or depth of judgment." That seems to fit.

We were not alone in this rather superficial form of thinking. The Germans had their own particular brand which they called "Sprachgesang." Who, of the past generation, does not remember those Alberichs and Wotans spitting verbal pips all over the place,

while Lehmann, Leider, and Janssen floated serenely aloft on the wings of purest song. There are many people who don't like opera. There are those who consider Lieder singing to be the apotheosis of vocal art. Perhaps it is. Let us make every concession possible to varied tastes. In all magnanimity let us allow that there are more and better singers of Lieder and small songs than ever before. But that does not help us in our quest. We have far too many vocal miniaturists, far too few who use the big brush and the big canvas. Even in the realms of folksong and Lieder, the singer has need of an upstanding voice to give sufficiently strong emphasis and make more compelling the contrasting effectiveness of the "still, small voice." It has become a habit to regard these songs as the particular prerogative of the cultivated musician, but they were not conceived in Chelsea, and many of them are meaningless unless they rollick along bravely, or illustrate the most impassioned thoughts of the unlettered, as well as the cultivated mind. Such songs as *Prometheus* (Wolf and Schubert), *Die Allmacht*, and the *Serious Songs* of Brahms certainly call for much more than soulful eyes and tonal etching. This line of argument brings us automatically to the fine songs of Stanford, Parry, and later, Vaughan Williams, which were looked upon at one time as specially invented for the art singer. Yet would it not be fair to say that they lost some of their effect by the highly stylised manners of the period? Handel also suffered severely in the transition—a tradition which has all too long persisted. Listen next time when *Rejoice greatly* and *Let the Bright Seraphim* are sung. You will see how the runs are invariably botched, because the singer's voice, too lightly poised, runs away with her. Mincing manners and affected wording rob Handel entirely of his grandeur. Yet what can we expect from singers bred for little more than balladry?

Modern composers have recognised that the musical pattern has shifted to another dimension, and they seldom call upon the singer for qualities of endurance and vocal abundance. Instead they have geared him to a smaller and more highly complicated vehicle. Here is one reason why our singers flounder so hopelessly when they are forced to leave their little lagoons and creeks, and swim out into the broad high seas. One is apt to think of the

standards of art as immutable, whereas of course they are constantly shifting. There has been a similar transition in all kindred arts. New ground has been, indeed must be, broken. The crinoline and nankeen trousers would look odd in the Oxford Street of to-day. We may disapprove of the trend of fashion at the time, but it is certain that the innovations of one decade will become the commonplaces of another. There are those who look upon the works of Epstein and Picasso as the final manifestations of æsthetic enterprise. But there will be other manifestations, no doubt, branching out in equally perverse directions. We may be thankful that Da Vinci and Michael Angelo did not get the urge to paint eyes on plates, or hand down to our generation, goggle-eyed, single-breasted pictures of their feminine friends—but we should also acknowledge freely the advantages that sprang from an uncharted world and days of unfettered leisure.

To some extent the various broadcasting agencies have been responsible for the deterioration of the singing standards of to-day. They have, it is true, been a boon and a blessing to the singer with a small voice, for, sing these never so badly, they can be assured of an oft-repeated welcome, since there appears to be no form of censorship in these happy-go-lucky organisations. They have their own original ways of working, and they do to some extent try to mitigate the accident of their being, by being strictly equalitarian. They drain singers of such personality as they may possess, but they are as ready to transform Lilliputians into tolerable sizes as to chop down those of Brobdingnagian tendencies. Great confidence is shown by our own B.B.C. in the all-round ability of its performers, for it will ask a man one day to sing the solos in the "B minor Mass," troll a ditty at a "Workers' Play Time" on another occasion, and then prove his versatility by blowing out his lungs to a brass-band accompaniment. He may have to travel to Llanelli on Sunday, to London on Monday, and to Leeds on Tuesday during the performance of this remarkable sequence, and if the B.B.C. rather parsimoniously foots the singer's bill, it at least offers him these delicious sight-seeing opportunities. In the time of Pope Leo X it was not at all singular for a man to be at the same time a bishop in France, a prior in Poland, an

archbishop in Germany, and a cardinal in Rome. This ancient catholicity of outlook can be rivalled to-day, without any Martin Luthers to worry about indulgences. (It remains only for the B.B.C. to cast Vera Lynn as Kundry and arrange for Flagstad to appear on a programme with Issy Bonn, to forge yet more harmonious links in the delightful brotherhood of Broadcasting House!)

These things are as unimportant in one way as the battle of the frogs and mice, except that they tend to create entirely false values. Little frogs become nigh to bursting with a sense of their own importance, and quite important frogs are as summarily deflated. It is bad for both.

This leads us directly to the crooning virus, and here one is justified in directly challenging the policy of the B.B.C., because it is the chief sponsor of this freakish intrusion. In an ordinary world, shorn of the aid of the microphone and Charing Cross Road, these unguinous offshoots of the parent body would probably not earn a penny. Yet the very processes that blunt the functions of the real singer operate in the opposite way with them. Normally they would be confined to the narrowest of fields, or even limited to the space of a mere ha-ha. Fathered by the B.B.C., they dribble over a vast panorama. It is indeed a strange inversion. Where you get crooners you inevitably get dance bands. They go together as surely as mustard and cress. And where you get dance bands you often get the sort of commercial support that is good neither for art nor morals. The B.B.C. could say in its defence that it gives the public what it wants, but this is questionable, for a recent poll sponsored by the Musicians' Union showed that Londoners preferred, by a vast majority, symphony or light music to dance music or jazz. (Besides, you don't give a baby everything it wants just to stop its howling!) A good dance band can add to the gaiety of life, and I am sure no one wants them to be unnecessarily vetoed. They become an aggravation only when they bring with them their sob-sisters and atrabilious brothers. If these vocal contortionists are so futile, you say, how can they possibly interfere with real singing? For one thing they take up an undue proportion of precious time, and for another, one must face the fact that such futility does find a responsive echo in the breasts of cer-

tain silly people, mostly young enough not to know better. When one hears of girls swooning over the snivelling of a male crooner, it is time to protect them from themselves, and substitute a more enlightened medium to meet the need in young people's lives for lightness and romance. The B.B.C. could start the campaign by refusing to make "stars" of its crooners; by ceasing to address them by their Christian names as though proud of their friendship, and certainly by putting some kind of a check on the manner and matter of their inane songs—"numbers" I think they call them. (Incidentally, does one *learn* crooning, or does it just occur?) Anyway, it is not right that singers of substance should have to vie for public favour with these slithery creatures, who evade all the rules of decent musical conduct.

To return to our subject. Anyone seriously interested and worried about the state of singing is bound at some time or other to take stock of our existing resources. With this end in view, four of us formed ourselves into an unofficial quorum. We were fairly representative of both past and present. One was old enough to remember the palmy days of song. My own recollection covered the tag end of this period and the subsequent decline and fall. The third member was a serious student of singing, ready to snatch at any advantage offered by modern conditions to confound our archaic counsels. The fourth was much more interested in "tinned music" as he called it, to the haphazard functions of the everyday performer. We made out a list of the principal singers in the country, having in mind the various halls in which they must operate. We took as our standards Tetrazzini, Lotte Lehmann, Olczewska, Caruso, de Luca, and Chaliapin, and it must be remembered that in their day these did not stand out of the ruck to any particular extent. After a long deliberation we came to the conclusion that there was no great singer in the country. There were seven singers, one coloratura, one dramatic soprano, one contralto, two tenors, one baritone, and one bass, possible of conversion into such. The best of the rest merited such remarks as "pleasant," "sweet," "pretty"—no more! We tried to find casts for *Otello*, *Don Giovanni*, Verdi's *Requiem*, the *B minor Mass* and the *Messiah*. It was a hopeless task, and we gave it up. We

found out another strange thing—that the goodness or badness of these singers bore no relation to their popularity, which seems to prove that there is no sense of judgment in the listening public.

We come now to what is perhaps the most important factor in the general deflation of the singer: the quality of the modern-day singing teacher. W. R. Anderson, in a recent issue of the *Musical Times*, speaking of a performance of *Il Seraglio* by a German opera company, said: "And we had real thrills. I forbear to annoy worthy native singers by the obvious comments and comparisons. Nothing more depresses me, an ancient lover of singing, brought up to the real stuff in both solo and choral work, than our poor standards in this art. There is no secret, I think, about the cure: just six years' hard work at fundamentals—and no concert appearance meanwhile. The old Italian custom, in a word."

Where is the singer to get these fundamentals? Time was when we imported French dancing masters to bring grace and style to our Mayfair salons. Perhaps we ought to introduce some of the best Italian masters of singing into this country. There is an old proverb which runs: "Inglese Italianato e un diabolo incarnato"—but we would put up with a few devils if we could manufacture a few singers. Teachers of singing were looked upon at one time as having a certain intellectual endowment, and singers could confidently put themselves into their hands. Those hands have now mainly become predatory claws. A general enquiry into modern day-teaching conditions would astound and shock the seeker, but that is another story. It is certain, however, that the profession has lost all its former dignity and importance. I should say to-day that there are almost as many teachers as singers, and especially since the advent of the refugees, a great proportion of whom seem to have been teachers of singing in their native countries. (It makes one wonder if anybody ever did any honest work on the Continent before the war!)

Yet there is no reason why we teachers should be as bad as we are, for the fundamental laws of singing are not difficult of application. The three basic principles of the old Italian school, loose jaw, upheld chest, and the justness of the spoken word, will always hold good. Instead, we get all sorts of contradictory and fanciful

slogans, such as: "Pour it into the top of the head." "Sing in the masque." "Throw the tone out." "Keep the tone back." And the choicest example of all: "Sing as the birds sing." What need, then, is there to go to a singing teacher at all? A canary is much cheaper! While we are about it, why not study the methods of the cicada, the Californian singing fish, or the frog?

What struck one most about the great singers was the unshaken firmness of their vocal line, a line which never threatened to become stiff. It gave an effect of tempered steel, bendable in varying degrees to the singer's will. Their throats remained open, varying the vowels as they might. Consonants were touched and as soon flung out of the way, and the framework was never in danger of collapsing. They started with an ideal in mind. They stuck to a plan, and thereafter laboured mightily during their apprenticeship. They handed on their gifts for hard work to their sons and daughters. What have we to offer to match their enthusiasm? A framework in the main, as rickety as an old garden fence; words that die on the lips of the singer because there is no propulsive power behind them, and tone in varying proportions, either too loose or too tight. Our singers usually take the line of least resistance, and if any of them do work, they work hard to make worse what is already wrong. Singers there are who look upon words as mere pegs on which to hang a tune; others, to quote Ernest Newman, "ruin the purely musical line by the verbal excrescences they make stand out on it like so many pimples and warts." Teachers of course might well argue that if their pupils could afford the time suggested by Mr. Anderson, they could alter all this, and produce Lehmanns and Carusos in plenty. It could equally well be argued that their pupils would get progressively worse. There is unfortunately an easy way of singing, wherein only a part of the vocal mechanism is used, and it is on this Tom Tiddler's ground that lazy singers and lazier teachers disport themselves. It is at this point that the wretched microphone steps in, and art and dignity step out. Most singers have a grievance against singing teachers, and think they ought to be shot at dawn, if not sooner. But the singer has himself largely to blame. If there were no fools there would be no rogues.

# THE B.B.C. ORCHESTRA ABROAD

KENNETH ADAM



"How dear to our hearts is the B.B.C., which was at the same time the field where all our hopes germinated during four years, and the essential lighthouse for our shadowy gropings towards the gleam of liberation! And for us musicians, more or less cut off from our bases at this period, the hundred members of the B.B.C.'s illustrious and brilliant orchestra, doyen of the great radio symphony ensembles, were so many unknown friends. Now for the first time we have seen them at work."

So wrote Raymond Charpentier in *Arts*, of the visit to Paris which was the first stage of the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra's ten-day tour of the Continent last summer. The sentiments were characteristic; it was a "little Liberation" all over again, wherever we went. We were stopped in the street and shaken by the hand; flowers were sent extravagantly to adorn the platforms; the enthusiasm was like that of the last night at the Proms; it would have been much the same even if the orchestra had played badly, which they did not.

Of the first concert, which Charpentier was reviewing, we were frankly nervous. The cultural life of Paris at present is intense, even feverish. On the familiar circular hoardings the lists of operas and concerts were intimidating. The audience at the Champs Élysées Theatre is notoriously sophisticated. When the orchestra took their places, the house was half empty. But by half-time it was full. The Parisian will not cut short his dinner, even in these straitened times. On the other hand, B.B.C. programmes must start to time (we had considerable difficulty in persuading the continental radio engineers of this), and there was D.B.S.T. to contend with. At the end (the Debussy Nocturnes), this fastidious,

fashionable audience, which included Menuhin and Freitas Branca, behaved as though Sir Adrian had just won "une course internationale de vélos." And "Tommy," B.B.C. Concerts Manager, went off to a nearby "bistro" to celebrate on hard-boiled eggs and a "demi." The critics without exception enjoyed Rawsthorne's Piano Concerto. "A little like a British Roussel," said Dumesnil in *Monde*, "played for us by a little man called Louis Kentner, who has fingers of chromium-plated steel, imperturbable calm and irresistible dynamism." In *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*, Pincherle described the orchestration as "delicate and distinguished," and praised especially the "very amusing use" of the xylophone as a symphonic instrument. Nadia Boulanger, an honoured visitor to Sir Adrian's dressing-room, spoke in *Spectateur* of the discipline of the orchestra as "a voluntary discipline ratified by each musician. It is due to this discipline and the minute preparatory work of the leader that the unity of rhythm is perfect and the tone even." But I suspect the orchestra themselves liked most the gentleman in the Paris *New York Herald Tribune*, who was delighted with their "very correct appearance. A lesson in deportment. Tails, and evening dresses, very severe, for the women. Manners which justify the world-wide reputation the English have for good behaviour!"

Receptions at the Town Hall, where the Vice-President of the Conseil Municipal turned out to be Jean Marin, wartime commentator in the B.B.C. French Service, at the British Embassy, where we were received by Lady Diana in a magnificent Ascot hat, and Poulenc positively bounced with delight at meeting old friends, and elsewhere, made the going strenuous. Ernest Hall was more than once mistaken for Ernest Bevin, who was also in Paris. This in no way disturbed the first trumpet. The radio concert, also in the Champs Élysées, before an invited audience, was another great success. Mlle Jeannine Michaud sang Ravel's *Scheherazade* with much feeling and sureness. Of the performance of the Concerto for Orchestra by Bartók, the critics spoke highly, and one of them commended Sir Adrian's "scrupulous honesty, sobriety of gesture and distinguished bearing."

In Brussels, city of fabulous plenty, our visit coincided with the

World Film Festival, at which two Italian films, *Opne City* and *Paisa*, had a remarkable success, but the prize was won by the Chevalier-Clair comedy, *Le Silence est d'or*. The Palais des Beaux-Arts was big enough to accommodate the films, the orchestra, and a magnificent show of Viennese tapestries. The concert hall is probably the finest in Europe to-day, and the orchestra rose to the occasion with a performance of the *Eroica*, which was worthy of the setting. Walton was present to take a bow after the playing of his Violin Concerto by Grumiaux, who is a great favourite of the Bruxellois.

While plans for a London concert hall languish, the "Beaux-Arts" goes serenely on its appointed path, a genuine contribution to European culture. It is a non-profit-making institution, guaranteed in part by the city of Brussels and in part by the Belgian Government. A number of auxiliary organisations have grown up under its wing, each with a separate personality, and among them are several dedicated to the training of musical and dramatic talent in the youth of the nation. When to the "Beaux-Arts" you add the magnificent headquarters of the national radio system, which maintains entirely separate services for the French-speaking and the Flemish-speaking populations, you begin to realise that Brussels is well on the way to becoming one of the great artistic capitals of Europe. We gave a Sunday afternoon concert in the Radio Concert Hall, which seats a thousand people in deepest luxury. Every detail has been studied for the orchestra's comfort, even to specially narrow chairs for the 'cellists. The lighting is controlled with dramatic effect from the balance and control box, and so are three giant microphone booms which travel the length of the hall on overhead pulleys. The bandroom by itself, as one envious member of the orchestra said, was large enough to be used as an orchestral studio in London.

The tour reached a crescendo in Holland, where they do not forget. Journalists followed us everywhere. If we went on a tour of the Amsterdam canals, or bathed at Scheveningen, it was front-page news. Even our agents, the remarkable and lovable Mr. and Mrs. Beek, were genuinely glad to see us; and wept when we departed, and such human sympathy is not a common trait in im-

presarios. The performance in the Concertgebouw was not only notable for the rendering of Schubert's Ninth Symphony, but also for the way in which Sir Adrian came through the Ordeal of the Steps. In this strange, but acoustically perfect, hall, the conductor enters high up at the back, has to descend a flight of some thirty steps, and then make his way through the brasses. This makes the taking of calls a nightmare, but Sir Adrian never lost his poise.

The Vaughan Williams Concerto for Two Pianos came in for some rough handling by the critics. "There must inevitably be prejudices," said *Tijd*, "when an experimenter brings all his research work out into the open"; and *Het Vrije Volk* thought that "the composer obviously feels the same about abnormality as a cat about water." *Algemeen Handelsblad* underlined the point: "Vaughan Williams has no belief in this style. This is more of an investigation than a necessary, artistic credo." Phyllis Sellick and Cyril Smith, on the other hand, were complimented on their modesty and precision.

The crown was literally set on this European journey when the Queen herself attended the concert at the Kurhaus in Scheveningen. She seldom goes out in public now, and more than one paper commented that for her to stay, as she did, for the whole concert was a striking tribute to the B.B.C. Whether she enjoyed Britten's Violin Concerto is a State secret. None of the critics did, though not all of them were as downright as the Hague paper which spoke of "a few tolerable bars floating in a sea of forced, deliberately clashing and counter-natural cerebrality—an insult to the violin and to our ears." The playing of young Theo Olof, which was new to the orchestra, made a profound impression on them, one which, I understand, was confirmed by the experience of British critics at the Cheltenham Festival the following week. But let the blind critic of the *Haagse Courant* sum up, as it may fairly be said he did, what his colleagues in three countries felt about the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra on its first post-war tour of the Continent: "The atmosphere was pleasant but strictly disciplinary at rehearsal. They started the performance as punctually as ever. We were confronted with great orchestral culture." The criticisms in the Press—how good they were and how much space they get

in papers no larger than our own—of the programme-building were echoed in private by agents and others, but, as a layman, I believe it is the function of the B.B.C. to reflect, on such occasions, the work of such men as Vaughan Williams, William Walton, and Benjamin Britten, to give the Continent the opportunity of hearing such young artists as Sellick and Smith. If we do not, it may be that no one will.

On a personal note I end. When Queen Wilhelmina, homely but of infinite dignity, took her place in the box, the audience of two thousand turned to her to sing the "Wilhelmus." Then, following our custom throughout the tour, Sir Adrian went into "The King." These Dutchmen, a stolid race, or so they say, *sang* our National Anthem, too. They knew the words. They sang them with fervour. My eyes were wet. So were those, I think, of my colleagues. I would have liked every member of the wartime B.B.C. to have heard that singing. It was at one and the same time a justification, and a fulfilment, of their work.

# EXAMPLES OF MUSIC PRINTING

*To illustrate the article by Hubert Foss on page 13*



*The music-engravers at work, showing the punches and the hammer, and "marking out" from "copy"*

## JOB's Curse.

[ 10 ]

Words Translated by Dr. Taylor, Bishop of Down in Ireland.

Set by Mr. Henry Purcell.



E T the Night perish, cur—sed be the Morn' whereon 'twas

faid, There is a Man-child born! Let not the Lord re—gard that day, but shrowd

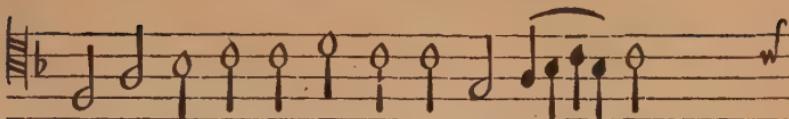
its fa—tal Glo—ry in some fal—len Cloud: May the dark Shades of an E—

ter—nal Night, ex—clude the leaft kind Beam of dawning Light; let unborn

Babes, as in the Womb they lie, if it be mention'd, give a Groan and dye: No sounds of

Joy therein shall charm the Ear; no Sun, no Moon, no twilight Stars appear; but a thick

*A page from Harmonia Sacra printed by Edward Jones in London and published by Playford in 1688. A good example of early hand-set music*



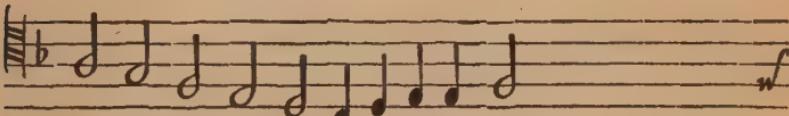
Ob ih - nen Na - hars Sohn, La - ban, be - kennt - lich?  
Fragt er, ob es auch wol stünd um ihn end - lich,



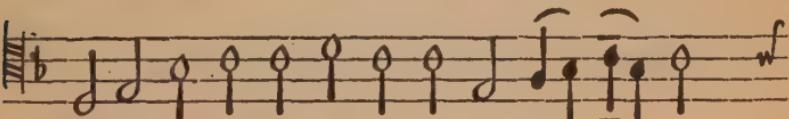
Und sie be - kräff - tig - ten diss



Trieb ih - re Schaaf da - her Ra - hel an - mu - - thig,



dar - auff sie ihn be - rich - te - ten ge - wiss,



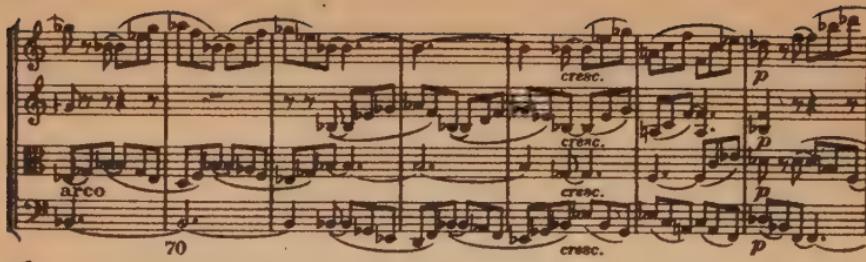
dass diss ein Toch - ter wä - re La - bans gü - tig.



Ja - cob sprach, es ist noch hoch Tag,

F

*A page from Wagner and Wagenseil by Herbert Thompson (Oxford University Press). Johannes Wagenseil (1633–1708) wrote a book on the Guild of the Master-singers to which Wagner was indebted. This page is set in the Walpergen music types, the original punches for which were introduced to the Oxford University Press by Peter Walpergen in 1683. These punches are still in use in casting type there to-day, and are a unique possession*



Musical score page 18, system 2. The score continues with four staves. Measure 70 concludes with *cresc.* and measure 80 begins with *f*. The instruments play eighth-note patterns, and dynamics include *sf*, *sf*, *sf*, and *f*.

Musical score page 18, system 3. The score continues with four staves. Measure 80 begins with *f*. The instruments play eighth-note patterns, and dynamics include *p*, *pizz.*, *arco*, and *f*.

Musical score page 18, system 4. The score continues with four staves. Measures 80 and 81 begin with *p* and *f* respectively. The instruments play eighth-note patterns, and dynamics include *crec.*, *p*, *crec.*, *f*, *p*, *sf*, *p*, *sf*, *p*, *sf*, and *f*.

*A typical page from an engraved score of a string quartet*

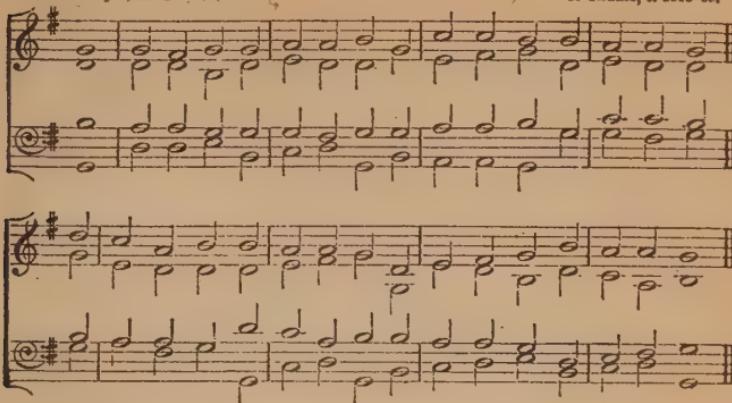
TIMES AND SEASONS.—EVENING

267

TALLIS' CANON. (L. M.)

*Slow and dignified*  $\text{♩} = 52$ .

T. TALLIS, c. 1515-55.



Bishop T. Ken, 1687-1711.

**G**LORY to thee, my God, this night | 2 Forgive me, Lord, for thy dear Son,  
For all the blessings of the light; | The ill that I this day have done,  
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings, | That with the world, myself, and thee,  
Beneath thy own almighty wings. | I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

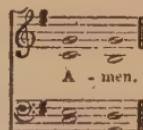
3 Teach me to live, that I may dread  
The grave as little as my bed;  
Teach me to die, that so I may  
Rise glorious at the awful day.

4 O may my soul on thee repose,  
And with sweet sleep mine eyelids close,  
Sleep that may me more vigorous make  
To serve my God when I awake.

5\* When in the night I sleepless lie,  
My soul with heavenly thoughts supply;  
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest,  
No powers of darkness me molest.

6\* You, my blest guardian, whilst I sleep  
Close to my bed your vigils keep;  
Divine love into me instil,  
Stop all the avenues of ill.

7. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise him, all creatures here below,  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.



386

*A page from The English Hymnal. The music was set by hand at the  
Oxford University Press*

# As Colin rang'd early

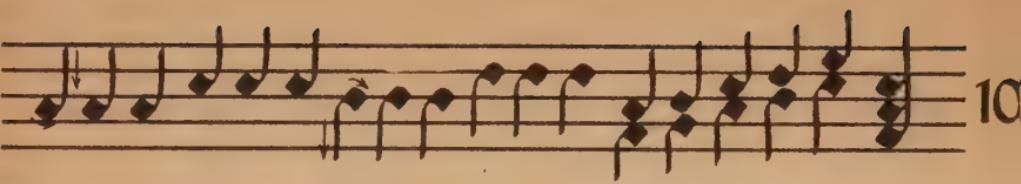
Moderato

As CO-LIN rang'd ear-ly one Morn-ing in Spring, to  
hear the Wood Choris-ters war-ble and sing, war-ble and sing,  
war-ble and sing, to hear the Wood Choristers war-ble and sing.

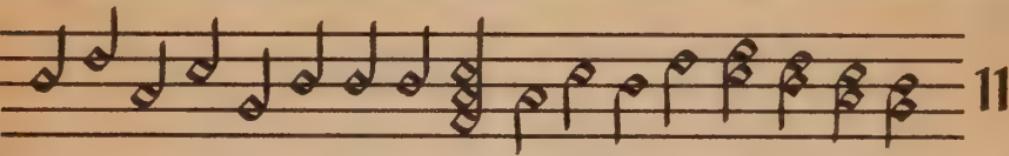
*One of Peter Warlock's Songs of the Gardens, engraved in the punches  
that were specially designed and cut for the Carnegie United Kingdom  
Trust's edition of Tudor Church Music. The border is set in type*



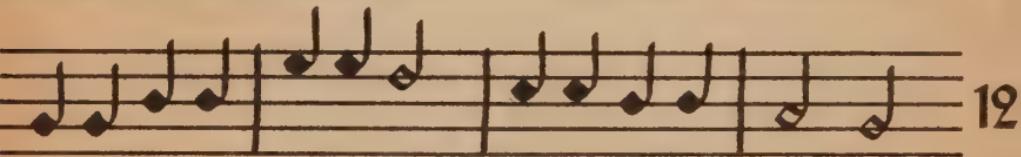
*A fanciful engraver's page from a piece entitled "A Melody on the Words of Command of the Manual Exercise of the British Army, sung by Mr. Woodham of the Westminster Loyal Volunteers, composed and respectfully dedicated to the patriotic Ladies of Great Britain by M. Cerri of the same corps."* The score is not dated, but the style appears to be that of 1815-20



Dasselbe wiederholen wir nun auch bei den Halben und können damit



schon ganz einfache Melodien aufschreiben (Beispiel 11 und Beispiel 12).



*Music-handwriting: a new style introduced by Rudolph Koch, based upon his father's music types. The stave-lines are in red*

1685 John Playford's Theater

A musical score for two voices. The top voice has a treble clef and a common time signature. The lyrics "All me a Bowl a" are written above the staff. The bottom voice has a bass clef and a common time signature. The page number 1685 is in the top left corner.

A musical score for two voices. The top voice has a treble clef and a common time signature. The lyrics "depth enough to be my Grave." are written above the staff. The bottom voice has a bass clef and a common time signature.

A musical score for two voices. The top voice has a treble clef and a common time signature. The lyrics "darn the Spheres As that bright G" are written above the staff. The bottom voice has a bass clef and a common time signature.

AG

Pen-written music and words, lithographed by  
Henderson & Spalding from originals written by  
A. C. Harradine in 1927. The staves and bar-lines  
are printed in red. From Old English Songs—  
amorous, festive, and divine by A. C. Harradine  
and Norman Suckling

FILL ME A BOWL, A MIGHTY BOWL Dr. JOHN BLOW: air and bass

A. Large as my ca-pacious Soul. Fill me a Bowl, a mighty Bowl. Large as my ca-pacious Soul : Vast as my Thirst is; Let it have  
share of all my Care, for I intend to bury t there. Let it of Silver fashion'd be, Worthy of Wine, worthy of Ale, Worthy to a -  
Star. Fill me a Bowl, a mighty Bowl. Large as my ca-pacious Soul. Fill me a Bowl, a mighty Bowl. Large as my ca-pacious Soul.



THE BBC  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA'S  
CONTINENTAL TOUR

During the second World War millions of music-lovers in occupied Europe received solace and hope from the broadcasts of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. When the Orchestra visited France, Belgium, and Holland last year it received and enjoyed a great welcome



The orchestra arrives at the Hague. Sir Adrian Boult is in the centre of this group on the station platform. Kenneth Adam, who gives his impressions of the tour in an article on page 26, is seen third from the left in the front row



*The orchestra plays "The King" in the magnificent Palais des Beaux Arts  
in Brussels, probably the finest concert hall in Europe*





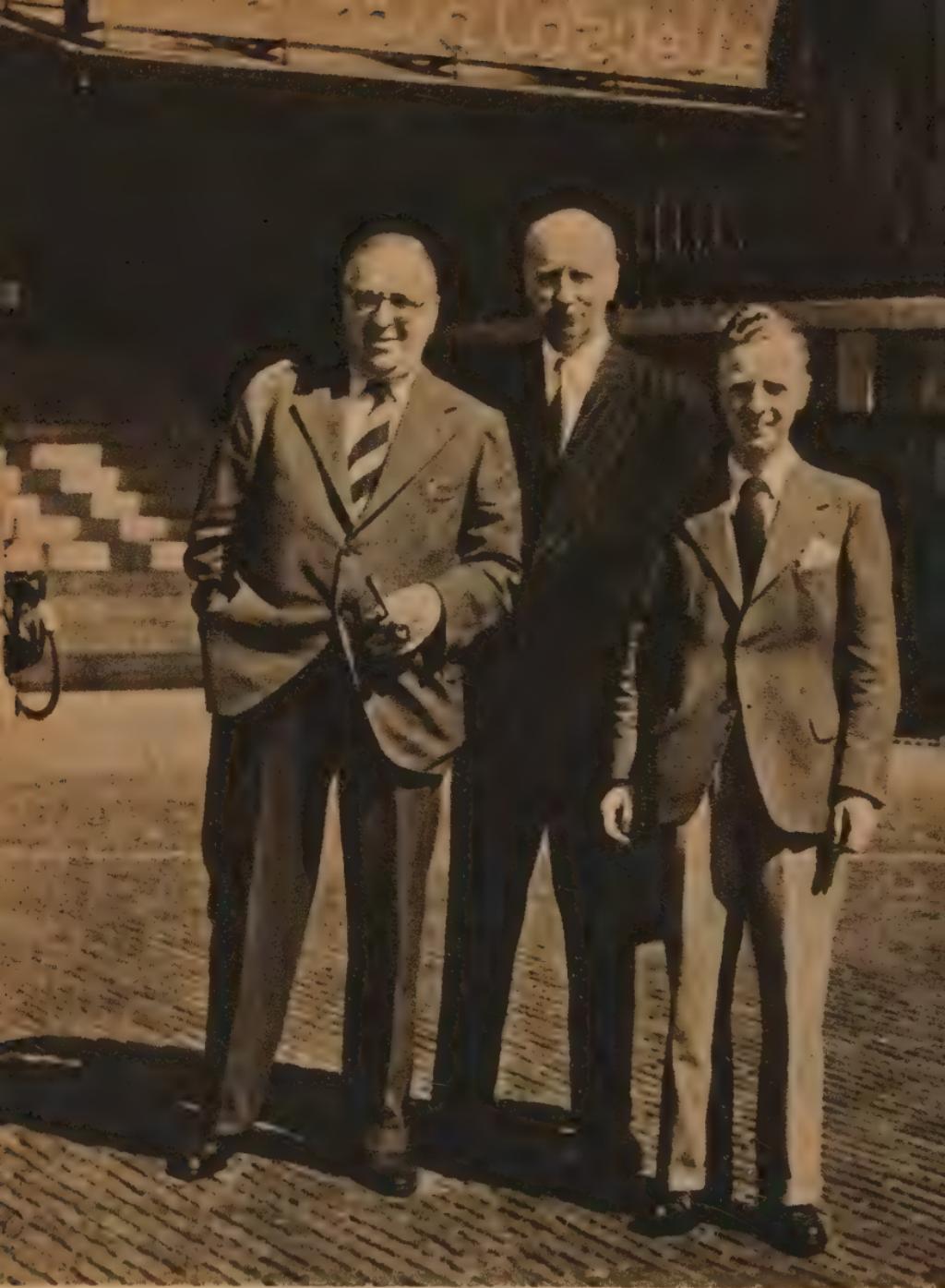
CLOSE-UPS OF THE BBC





## SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA





*Sir Adrian Boult with Ernest Hall (left), President of the Orchestra and Principal Trumpet, and Ralph Clark (right), Principal Clarinet, at Scheveningen in Holland*

# CHELTONHAM'S CONTRIBUTION TO MUSIC

FRANK HOWES



*We publish below the speech given by The Times Music Critic at the Public Lunch celebrating the opening of the third annual Cheltenham Music Festival.*

SPEAKING officially as a kind of watchdog of music, I want to say why I think a festival like this is valuable to our musical life. Last night in our critics' Forum we came near to discussing the value of music philosophically, a thing I am quite prepared to do, but not now. We should all agree that music has a social value, still more that it has a personal value—that indeed is self-evident and does not require proof. We know its powers of solace and encouragement in the war, when many discovered it for the first time. We know that it is an enrichment of life; it becomes an absorbing passion and a lifelong interest (note the two facets). Now a festival is a stimulus to the musical life of the country, because it is music presented in concentration with heightened appeal. A Festival is not just a series of concerts—the Proms are that and Harringay is a Festival merely by courtesy of the term. A Festival is a concentration, numerical and mental, of music *plus* something—that something may be the holiday atmosphere of a place like Cheltenham, where one can concentrate on the music without the distractions of normal life; it may be emphasis on some special feature, such as we see here again in an emphasis upon contemporary English music; it may be an attempt to produce superfine performances in ideal conditions—and here some attempt has been made to secure this by having the Hallé Orchestra, which permits of better rehearsal than most other orchestras as at present organised. To this I will return in a minute. Or it may be concerts plus, in the literal sense, as here where you have lectures and discussions to minister to our interest in music at the

same time as our ear is being fed by the concerts. Your Festival then has claims on every ground to the title "Festival," the epithet festive, and at this board the quality of a feast.

I mentioned the quality of performance we may confidently expect from the Hallé Orchestra, which is a very unusual thing for a critic to do: the more as I have had little opportunity of hearing this orchestra. But on general grounds you have in the Hallé an orchestra which has had a Phoenix-like rejuvenation. Its conductor has proved himself a first-rate trainer of new young blood, he has had it long enough to mould it into a responsive and flexible instrument and long enough for it to acquire a style—some of our London orchestras, even when they play well, lack that positive flavour that is style. Because orchestras have a corporate personality, one is often astonished at the apparent lack of that corporate fellowship among orchestral players that anyone who has ever participated in concerted music knows so well. I can see that, after ten years at a back desk of second fiddles or counting two hundred and sixteen bars before taking up the tambourine, the orchestral player may no longer feel that passionate loyalty to his orchestra that men feel for their old schools, where they have passed many unhappy terms, athletes for their clubs, old soldiers for their regiments, and even journalists for their papers. But it is unfortunate that, at the very moment when the conditions of the orchestral players' lives have been stabilised with annual renewable contracts and respectable pay, there should have been a great break away towards free-lance work because of inflated fees offered in the film world. It is unfortunate that so little responsibility is shown towards the art of music, and such disregard of the difficulties of orchestral finance manifested. I will not enlarge on this, but I commend these observations to the Musicians' Union. In the Hallé happily there has been a measure of loyalty to the organisation and its conductor, and a precarious stability achieved, so that the interpretations of a dynamic musician are ours to enjoy under reasonable musical conditions.

Cheltenham is a good place for a festival, particularly for a festival in which English music is to the fore. It is common and correct to speak of an English renaissance, and it seems possible to claim

for our country at this moment a greater vitality in musical creation (whatever conditions of performance may be here) than anywhere else in the world—Russia possibly excepted. There is great productivity in Russia from a number of able composers like Prokofiev and Shostakovich, an unequal talent; the old nationalist tradition is still alive in Khachaturian, but I suspect that there is a lot of mechanical music-making of very poor quality—one unfortunate consequence of working for the State. The twenty-five symphonies of Myaskovsky sound turgid, and much of the music of the younger Russian composers that we hear often seems to lack sap. But however it may be in Russia, we, at any rate, have every reason for pride in our present achievements. The prime mover in this renaissance who gave it its aims of independence, integrity, and high quality was Hubert Parry, a Gloucestershire man. If in his own music he did not achieve the independence of continental models at which he aimed, that was accomplished technically in the next generation by a man born in this Gloucestershire town, Gustav Holst. In the meantime, in the next county Elgar was declaring to the world, in the *Enigma Variations* and *Gerontius*, that new life was astir in England—he put us back on the map of Europe. Even more quintessentially English is the music of Ralph Vaughan Williams, whose roots are in our native folk-song and our ancient polyphony, whose music was pronounced by European critics in 1935 to be “the authentic voice of England.” All these are Gloucestershire men, and you can add to them two notable song-writers—we have always had a genius for the voice—Ivor Gurney and Herbert Howells.

You do well in your Festival to stress our English music, but not to segregate it—let it take its place among the master works of all countries. To-day we have Moeran who, like Vaughan Williams, has built on a folk-song foundation, but in his music spans the Irish Sea and the Norfolk Broads. We have Britten, an East Anglian, prolific, and a great one for “framing music to the life of the words,” like his great predecessor from East Anglia, William Byrd. We have Michael Tippett, a Cornishman, who has shown a gift for leadership and moral inspiration to his younger contemporaries for the fertilisation of music of the kind which

Parry exercised in an unparalleled degree. We have Alan Rawsthorne, a Lancashire man, who pursues the traditional independence of the Lancashire man, follows no school, and goes his own way. We have Ian Whyte, from Scotland, following Alexander Mackenzie in giving to English music the distinctive dialect flavour of the north—or rather so I suspect, since I have had very little experience of him either as composer or conductor.

There are occasions for blunt speech, sharp comment, and the knife, and I hope I know when to use them. This is not one of them. This is a legitimate occasion for congratulation, self-congratulation even inside Cheltenham. But you will allow me as an outsider to offer, not merely my good wishes for the continued prosperity of a festival now becoming firmly established in its third year, but my congratulations on what you have achieved, on the imagination that has gone to its planning, to the energy and initiative that, in this relaxing climate, have launched the Festival with such success, and on the financial courage of the Cheltenham Corporation. One need not be a Socialist of the strictest sect to recognise that there are fields of enterprise in which the community, organised either as the State or as the municipality or in public corporations, can do better than that individual effort which is the source and fountain of all art. If we must have an army, it is better for it to be a national army and not a confederacy of robber barons or the coloured shirts of an overbearing and strident section of the community. Music on its largest scale in opera and symphony has always been just beyond the resources of the individual, and in these days, when no one is allowed to have any money, it is incumbent on the community organised in State or city or public corporation to undertake those duties, which it was once the rich man's pleasure, privilege, and moral obligation to support. In this country we have sufficient political wits to devise some system whereby the community pays the piper, runs his piping business for him, but does not call the tune.

Let there be no mistake about that—it is the musician who deals with tunes. I keep an eye on the Arts Council for any sign of dictation to those whom it subsidises. I am beginning to wonder, in the light of recent evidence, whether some of us must not scrutin-

ise what the B.B.C. is up to in this respect. I am not a listener to the radio, and I go no farther than ascertaining that the B.B.C. does its public duty in supplying a great variety of excellent music, but power is a thing to be watched, criticised, and in the end opposed. You in Cheltenham who have a specific problem to solve, namely, to organise such a concentration of music as we call a festival and so help the musical life of England, seem to me to have reached a perfectly balanced solution. You have a good musical policy, the performance of the great classical masterpieces and of contemporary English music; you have catered for the growing interest in music as well as the love for it. You are ideally situated to do, and you have done, what is more needed in England at this moment than anything else in the world—namely to spread a feeling of gaiety, add to our stock of beauty, and make us all happy. We are grateful.

# TO START AN ARGUMENT

## IV: HAS CONCERT CRITICISM ANY VALUE?



M. MONTAGU-NATHAN SAYS—

It is rather more than twenty-five years ago since Henry Coates, then Editor of the American journal, *The Musician*, drew attention to a condition of affairs which seemed to him to merit the description adopted by him as the title of an article. It was "The Recital Scandal." Mr. Coates's particular bugbears were the agencies and the teachers who encouraged incompetents to give recitals—with the ulterior motive of obtaining respectively profit and publicity for themselves. Commenting on these remarks, Ernest Newman, at that time representing the *Observer*, pleaded on behalf of these alleged delinquents that agents and teachers "must live," and that they were no more to be blamed for their recognition of this obligation, and their determination to fulfil it, than a lawyer or a dentist. No! protested the English musicologist, the arch-offender was the Press. His complaint was that the newspaper proprietor or editor "labours under the pathetic delusion that the public is interested" in these half-baked recitalists.

Commenting in turn on this distinguished commentator's views, the present writer expressed the opinion that "the first step towards reform is for editors to appoint critics who can be relied upon to write more about music and less about performance, and to ask such critics, on engagement, to outline a policy which has some relationship both to common-sense and to the welfare of the Art concerned."

We realise how much rosin has powdered over fiddle-bridges since these views were published when we read Mr. Newman's affirmation that "this is a free country." Yet, in this considerable interim, the method of the music critic appears to have changed very little for the better. He may have become a shade more conscientious

than the practitioner of thirty years ago, who frequently wrote notices of which the first object was to mention the recitalist in a phrase that would constitute "something to quote" when applying for engagement to provincial concert-giving concerns. On the whole, however, one can safely assert that critics to-day write far more about performance than they do about music, and this really amounts to a grave misapprehension, not only of the function, but of the very purpose of criticism. It is in the highest degree absurd, for instance, for a critic to inform the musical public that he prefers the Scherzo of a certain symphony played a trifle slower than the speed adopted by Signor So-and-So—and more manifestly because were the eminent Italian to swap jobs with the critic, the verdict would obviously be reversed. For the dramatic critic the position is totally different. He writes his *critique* of a play in full expectation that the piece will receive a number of performances, and if he condemns the acting of a player he does so as part of a recommendation that the public should stay away from that play. (This recalls J. M. Barrie's telegraphed response to an intimation from an amateur-friend of the latter's imminent appearance in a performance of *Hamlet*. It was: "Thanks for the warning.") As, however, a concert is never repeated, there is little point in drawing attention either to defects or qualities in performance unless they have been of such scandalous dimensions as to call for a general warning to eschew attendance at any future function in which the offender may take part.

As specimens of the futile, we may quote a few extracts which have recently appeared in the responsible dailies:

"... shewed that technical difficulties do not worry this accomplished instrumentalist." There is no shadow of a hint here that it would be a disgrace, or at least a grave misfortune, if they did! A 'cellist gave a recital at which Royalty was present. The patroness in question was allotted exactly one line. The performer (four lines) was described as an artist with a commendable technique and an appealing tone. The composer, Hindemith, whose work had not previously been heard, was curtly dismissed in a line and a half—suggesting that, as a matter of public interest, his composition ranked in importance between a princess and a performer.

Referring to a Chopin-Liszt programme, another critic devoted himself exclusively to the performance, and failed to mention a single item. Recording that "energy and vitality are valuable qualities—most valuable when strictly controlled," he omitted to indicate whether the expression of these sentiments was objective, and left his readers speculating whether it was a targetless and space-filling soliloquy. Whilst agreeing that when a performer reaches such heights of interpretation the masterpiece itself becomes almost a matter of secondary importance, it is nevertheless useless for a critic to attempt description of such artist's outstanding merits unless he himself is really competent to describe them. "She secures her impetus, not merely by the cut of her down-bow, but by the unusual thrust of her up-bow," merely enables the experienced to recognise such criticaster by the cut of his jib.

Finally, we may quote from a charming piece of prose, so poetic as to be worthy of a real, instead of a bogus, cause. "Yet he sang them with so much feeling and musical understanding that these were the best, as they were the noblest, of his performances. He is most skilful in the management of his voice, and has the art of floating his words upon the music. . . . He is, perhaps, inclined to make too much use of a rather toneless half-voice . . ." To whom is all this addressed? Is the public really so anxious to hear the advice thus belatedly offered to those responsible for the training of this singer, themselves "accessories before the fact" of that "rather toneless" vocal effect?

But let us return to the main contention. For the most part criticisms of past performance serves no practical artistic purpose. What the concert-going public really and urgently requires—more particularly that section of it described as the "new musical"—is that articles devoted to description and discussion of works to be performed at a forthcoming concert should be published a sufficient time before the concert to afford the genuine music-lover an opportunity to play over the works on a gramophone record, which would provide a musical illustration of any point to which such introductory description may have drawn specific attention. If the critic should consider that Tchaikovsky's fourth symphony deserves the nickname "The Hysterical," and says so in his pre-

liminary article, he will have done little harm, since his readers will be able eventually to determine for themselves what they think of the work when performed. The crux of the whole question is that a notice of this kind, which deals solely with the music and is based on a close acquaintance with it, is not so likely to be influenced by a temporarily defective functioning of the critic's pancreatic juices, and that the hurried consumption of a pork pie before rushing off to his nightly round of West-End halls may have quite a disastrous influence upon a hastily written account of the work as performed at a particular concert.

### ON THE OTHER HAND

ALEC ROBERTSON SAYS—

It appears to be Montagu-Nathan's main contention, in his curious assemblage of half-truths and sudden changes of direction, that "for the most part criticism of past performance serves no practical artistic purpose." I will at once draw Mr. Nathan's attention to the following sentence, written on June 4, 1890, which is taken from a criticism of a performance of *Il Trovatore* at Covent Garden Theatre. "At no point can the stage-manager come to the rescue if the artists fail. Mr. Harris has secured the success of *Les Huguenots*, *Faust*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *William Tell* by drill and equipment, costume and scenery; but for *Il Trovatore* he can do nothing but pay band, conductor, and principals; let them loose on the work in his theatre, and sit looking at them helpless. Unless, indeed, he were to go down next day and read out the unfavourable Press notices to them, emphasising the criticism with the homely eloquence of which he is a master."

This passage, taken from the first volume of *Music in London, 1890–94*, by Bernard Shaw, then the music critic of *The World*, under the pseudonym of "Corno di Bassetto," might have been written about more than one production in the recent season of opera at Covent Garden.

Mr. Shaw's criticism had the practical artistic value of being true, and it is none the less true fifty-seven years later.

Quite apart, however, from any such considerations, I maintain that criticism of past performances by artists whose names may mean absolutely nothing at all to us is, almost invariably, readable, entertaining, and often instructive.

As an illustration of the second of these qualities I will quote the following extract, taken from *A Ramble Among the Musicians of Germany* (1828), by Edward Holmes, better known to us as the author of a biography of Mozart. It concerns a performance of Rossini's *Otello* at Munich. "Mademoiselle Schweitzer presented the phenomenon of a graceful and attractive woman on the stage, though shorn of one of her natural legs, and supplied with a substitute of cork. I was indebted for this piece of history to one of the people of the opera, who thought the dexterity of her carriage worthy of observation." And how vividly Burney brings a performance to life when he says, in his *Commemoration of Handel* (1784), that when the excellent Mr. Sargent played the *obbligato* part in *The Trumpet Shall Sound*, "displeasure appeared in every countenance." The eighteenth-century audience was evidently not so insensitive to instruments out of tune as we have been led to suppose.

The fact is, it seems to me, that criticism of past performance is both more readable and far more instructive as informing us about standards then prevailing, than accounts of what the critics thought about the music.

Mr. Nathan ignores the fact that when "the responsible dailies" had the space, new works were adequately described, and frequently took up the whole space of the weekly column allotted to an article on music. Even now, in very difficult circumstances, the critics do their best, and works such as Hindemith's *Ludus Tonalis* were by no means dismissed in a line. I cannot imagine the newspaper reader wanting descriptions of Beethoven's piano sonatas or Chopin's preludes, and, surely, the description and discussion of works to be performed is the job of the writer of analytical notes, not of the newspaper critic.

I should have thought, also, that an author of Mr. Nathan's

standing would not have stooped to the old trick of quoting a few foolish-looking sentences out of their context; and he must know that everyone writes nonsense at times.

His analogy with dramatic criticism, which may be presumed to influence attendance, has little relevance. Let him ask himself why so much space is devoted, in daily papers, to the description and criticism of sporting events which few of those who so eagerly read it have attended. The recital is also, in its way, a sporting event.

There are two other related points to be taken into consideration. Artists who submit their work to the public have a certain right to have it criticised, and the critic, for his part, as a trained and well-informed member of that public, may be regarded, not only as an assessor of the work, performance, and music submitted, but also, priggish though it may sound, as keeper of the performer's or the composer's artistic conscience.

If the law of libel permitted, there would be far harder hitting at some of the careless and unworthy work which is submitted to the gullible public, but, even as it is, I am continually amazed, not at the harshness, but at the charity with which imperfect performance is greeted. Gone, apparently, are the days when a critic would write, as one celebrated critic did, "Miss A. gave her first recital at the Wigmore Hall. I trust it will be her last." There are still too many Miss A.'s about.

To be destructive, however, is nothing but an occasional necessity of the critic's job, and it is only in England that criticism is looked upon as inevitably destructive. Mr. Nathan appears to consider it as shameful if a critic declares that the performer's technique is not up to the job. This is not destructive criticism. How many singers can perform Pamina's aria "Ach ich fühl's" from *Die Zauberflöte* with perfection of technique? Very few, if any. How many pianists, who may have admirable qualities, can successfully bring off such a work as Brahms's "Paganini" Variations, in which it is hit or miss?

In conclusion, nightly rounds of West-End halls (where are they all, by the way?), notwithstanding, I reaffirm that the reporting of recitals by the critics of the responsible dailies is of real value

in being, more often than not, interesting, entertaining, informative, and, possibly, instructive. I will end with an illustration of the last point. The late Edwin Evans wrote of a young composer who had given a recital of his works, that his invention was laboured, and when not being inventive he was portentously reminiscent. The composer saw the red light and, with the saving of much paper and brain-fag, turned his attention to other fields of musical activity. And this I well know, because it was myself.

# BRAINS TRUST

*JULIAN HERBAGE*



Q. What influence (if any) has Jazz had upon serious composers?

A. I must be on my guard here, because Jazz experts are far more highbrow, pedantic, and dogmatic than any music critic. Jazz has been defined as "an American musical dialect strongly influenced by the Negro." Its origins, I think, can be traced to the American Negro prayer meetings. At these meetings the preacher announces a text, and, together with the congregation, elaborates it until they have extemporised a musical composition. Extemporisation, be it noted, is the operative word, and Jazz is performer's music, as opposed to the composer's music of the European countries.

Extemporisation, an art which is largely lost in European music, is normally based on a formula. A typical Jazz formula is the Blues. The Blues is a musical form far stricter than classical sonata form. Its typical scale includes the flattened third and flattened seventh (over-flattened by any characteristic Blues singer), accompanied by a harmony based on the European major scale. Harmony and melody, indeed, produce a piquant clash between major and minor thirds and sevenths, and perhaps for this reason the melody in Jazz has become rhythmically independent of its accompaniment. So the contribution of Jazz to music consists of the rhythmic independence of melody and accompaniment, the use of two different scales, and the importance of the performer as an improviser.

All three factors have had some influence on modern European music. The simultaneous use of two different scales has encouraged polytonality, rhythmic independence of melody and accompaniment has inspired subtlety in cross-rhythms, while extemporisation, though still banned from serious music, has been beneficial

to standards of performance. In this latter sphere it is significant that Bartók wrote his *Contrasts* with Szigeti and Benny Goodman in mind.

European music—or perhaps Western music would be a better description—will, I think, always be dominated by the composer. The age when the composer and performer were one, or when the composer was merely the performer's servant, has probably gone for ever. Western music now exists in full detail before it is performed. The disadvantage of this system is that performance may become stereotyped and perfunctory. To my mind, the main contribution of Jazz is the elevation of the performer to the rank of artist in his own right, and it is the technical excellence of Jazz performers, rather than the intrinsic value of the music they play, which has enriched so-called "serious" music.

Q. Is there such a thing as musical style, and if so, of what does it consist?

A. There most certainly is, but the definition of the word "style" is a difficult matter. In its original meaning the word simply meant an instrument for scratching letters on a wax-covered tablet, but nowadays it is used to distinguish the manner of saying something from the matter actually said. Style has always reached its peak of perfection in the most civilised ages—the "classic" ages when man was at one with the community, rather than the "romantic" ages, when man was revolting against society.

Stylists have sometimes been born in the wrong age, as in the case of Purcell, who declared that music was in a period of Nonage, a period of upheaval and experiment. To-day we live in a similar age, and the stylists among us have little upon which to build. So the question of musical style has a great importance for us to-day, since it is not our natural heritage. Great style demands great performance, and there are few really great, as opposed to technically gifted, performers among us to-day.

Style is something that no composer can write in his score, but must rely on the intuition of his interpreter to provide. It is, indeed, through loss of style, rather than inferiority of matter, that much music is relegated to the past. The appallingly small concert repertoire of to-day is an indictment, not so much of our audiences, as

of the lack of style of our performers. Could they master the styles of a larger repertoire, their performances would carry conviction. Unfortunately, in the present age, neither have our audiences the critical capacity for discerning true style, nor have our performers in general the ability to display it. It is a vicious circle, made even more vicious by the pecuniary rewards available to the charlatan. While synthetic art has a higher market value than true artistry, music is doomed to suffer a decline, and become the medium for mere publicity and sensationalism. Our Victorian grandfathers may have suffered from the worthy delusion of "art for art's sake," but we to-day are destroyed by the creed of "the easiest jobs for the highest money." In such conditions music must become a Black Market, with musical spivs idolised above musical stylists.

Q. What is the most difficult instrument to play, and why?

A. I've always found the answer to be the one I'm playing at the moment. Each instrument has its particular difficulty, and the question of relative difficulty depends on the question of relative capacity. Just as in athletics, one person is a potential long-jumper and another a marathon runner, so the person who finds the trumpet easy might find the violin difficult. It is probably easiest to blow a brass instrument, but difficult to play a trombone in tune, on account of its slide, and difficult to pitch the right note on a French horn, because you play in the upper range of harmonics, where a fractional maladjustment of your lips will produce the wrong sound. The trumpet, I will admit, is more difficult than the cornet, because the former has a shallow mouthpiece and a narrower bore for brilliance of tone, which is more difficult to control; but then, cornet players are often given more difficult parts to perform. Of the wood-wind instruments, I find the flute easiest to blow, and though I can get a noise out of a clarinet, I can get nothing from double-reed instruments like the oboe, except an occasional squeak. However, since many people play the oboe very well, I presume it must be my fault. Perhaps it would be fair to say that any virtuoso on his particular instrument has surmounted equal technical difficulties.

## NEW BOOKS



*Mozart on the Stage.* Christopher Benn, with an Introduction by Richard Capell, and Illustrations by Kenneth Green. Benn. 15s.

As Mr. Capell's sympathetic and thoughtful introduction informs us, the author of this posthumous book was shot down in action in the Near East in 1941, not yet thirty years of age. Benn was past his middle twenties at the time of writing it, which fact may account for certain immaturities of judgment and the general impression of a keenly enthusiastic but not quite substantial treatment of the subject. The book will not supersede Ernst Lert's thorough *Mozart auf dem Theater*, from which it takes its title; yet, despite its shortcomings, perhaps inevitable in view of the complex nature of the subject and the writer's lack of practical experience in stage-craft, it will not fail to give the reader, unacquainted with the manifold problems attendant upon the production of the Mozart operas, an idea of the scope of this subject.

The operas discussed are the four works to be found in the repertory of most German theatres. (Yet why was *Il Seraglio* omitted?) The more immediate incentive for the writing of the book was, so it would appear, the exemplary productions at Glyndebourne to which frequent reference is made. Benn's method consists, after perhaps too detailed a synopsis of the plot, in discussing its characters and then proceeding, act by act and scene by scene, to an analysis of the diverse stage issues involved —issues which, in the case of *Don Giovanni* and *The Magic Flute*, owing to their loose framework and their dramaturgical inconsistencies, present the producer with a fair number of tough nuts. Benn evinces a keen eye for such problems, and is to my mind at his best in the chapters on *Don Giovanni* and *Cosi fan tutte*, his table establishing the likely time-factor in the sequence of the *Don Giovanni* scenes deserving special mention. His style is eminently readable and lucid, which, together with

Kenneth Green's delightful illustrations drawn from the Glyndebourne and Sadler's Wells productions, should make the book a welcome addition to one's Mozartiana.

MOSCO CARNER

*Violin and 'Cello Making and Repairing.* Robert Arton. Cassell.  
7s. 6d.

This is a new issue of an earlier publication concerned with violin-making. The present volume includes also a discussion on the art of making violoncellos which, as the author rightly points out, is not merely a question of measure. A better title would be "Violin-making as a Hobby." The information Mr. Arton imparts would, of course, be useful to anyone. But makers, or at least the successful makers, are born in the craft and know all about it. Your Stradivaris, Forsters, Hills, who carry on their work from generation to generation, will not need and may even resent advice. There must be also another class of men who, loving fiddles as others love china, possess the deft touch of the perfect craftsman, and these will find here a guide and an incentive. That such men exist, and that their numbers are not few, is shown by the fact that the earlier publication passed in a comparatively short time through three editions.

What more harmless or pleasing hobby can there be than making violins? The cutting, fitting, polishing, and putting together of so delicate a thing must be a perfect joy; the finished product—a thing of lovely proportions—can, in the hands of a master, sing. What other man-made article can do as much? One can easily understand how the son of a maker asked for nothing better than to be allowed to follow in his father's footsteps, and how even the cutting of scrolls came to have a fascination that the unimaginative could never understand. There is a record of a craftsman who in the thirteenth century spent his days carving beautiful scrolls for lutes, and was so little appreciated by his contemporaries that they dubbed him "the lazy one." But, then, it is the common fate of prophets to be misunderstood in their day.

Mr. Arton's experience appears to be very wide. He goes so far as to warn violinists against hanging their fiddles on the wall.

We have never met violinists who made a practice of doing so; but, no doubt, Mr. Arton knows what he is about, even if others have found walls festooned with fiddles something of a rarity—except in the atelier of the maker.

F. BONAVIA

*Brahms*. Ralph Hill. Duckworth: Great Lives series. 4s. 6d.

Ralph Hill has acquired a reputation for a punching virility in his writing and opinions. In *Brahms*, which was first published in 1941, this clear conciseness of style is as fresh and robust as ever. He does not, however, commit the grave error of interposing his own personality to the extent of superseding that of the man whose life he is reviewing. The scene is set, Brahms is put upon the stage, and from then on takes control.

This book is quite small, and to get the whole of the life of Brahms into it has obviously necessitated some ruthless pruning. The author has turned this difficulty into an advantage, and by clearing away the mass of dates and facts that are easily obtainable from the many books of reference, he gives us a clear picture from a distance, as it were, so that events are small but in perfect focus.

Mr. Hill is mainly concerned with the musical influences on Brahms and the effect of Brahms on contemporary musicians, and he ends the book with a summary of the origins of Brahms's style, criticisms then and now, for and against, and with a general analysis of his works. However, maintaining the balance throughout, we get brilliant little descriptions of Brahms's appearance and conversation, both at his best and worst.

GEORGE F. KNIGHT

*Seven Essays*. George Sampson. Cambridge University Press.  
10s. 6d.

*Made for Millions*. (Ed.) Frederick Laws. Contact Publications.  
10s. 6d.

It is always surprising to find a practitioner's devotion to the arts in men whose day-by-day existence is dedicated to seemingly

artless careers: a doctor philosophising exquisitely, a clerk preparing the best essays in the language at an East India House desk, a millionaire banker attempting poetry—such are the surprises, and all of them are heartening. But George Sampson belongs to a profession that should be eternally faithful to the arts, and is, as a rule, faithful only to pedagogy. He is an educator—an inspector of schools at that—but apparently he despairs the humdrum precedents and follows the one exceptional example—Matthew Arnold.

Mr. Sampson does not concern himself with the irritating minutiae of marks, examinations, and curricula. He pleads urgently for the restoration of æsthetic values to education, and he refuses to acquiesce when music, literature, the theatre, and painting are divorced from schooling.

Of his seven essays only two deal, as it were directly, with music; but for himself the author has achieved such unity of æsthetic purpose that, as Goethe and even Johnson cannot be kept from his Mozart essay, so must music play an attractive background to his account, "A Boy and His Books." (An excellent piece of evocative autobiography this—Mr. Sampson must bring the musicians forward and give us "A Boy and His Music.")

The essay on "Bach and Shakespeare" brings Mr. Sampson's favourite arts to equality. It is an entrancing and, I believe, a hitherto unnoticed parallel that he draws between these supreme geniuses who, in their time, have both been neglected, misunderstood, mishandled, and misinterpreted. Both were provincials who, surprisingly, achieved universality; both reticent men whose works are more important than their biography; of both it might have been written, as Schweitzer wrote of Bach: "(He) was apparently unconscious of the extraordinary greatness of his work . . . he never dreamed that his works alone, not those of men around him, would remain visible to the coming generations . . . his immense strength functioned without self-consciousness like the forces of nature."

On Mozart Mr. Sampson is informative but less original. Though he comes from a generation that was more generally pledged to Wagner, he is a devoted Mozartian, and his devotion

and his knowledge are enough to endear him to most of us who follow the same cult. He does not emphasise as much as some would wish the rare opportunities that Mozart allowed to interpretative artists to be truly creative, but he would perhaps argue that over-analysis of Mozart is as debilitating to the æsthetic senses as the dissection of a rose.

Even those misguided specialists who read this book only for its essays on music should not ignore the last essay. In "The Century of Divine Songs" Mr. Sampson defends eighteenth-century hymnody on musical as well as literary grounds, and, for once, eighteenth-century devotion and artistry is allowed to supplant eighteenth-century affectation. (I would welcome the author's evidence for his assertions about the authorship of the text for Handel's *Messiah*.)

Mr. Sampson writes, by implication, of the part that the arts *should* play in the lives of millions; the editor of *Made for Millions* has gathered together a team—a strong team and, for the most part, an angry team—to write of the *actual achievement* of the popular arts.

Each of his critics emphasises the fact that, though the twentieth century would appear to have developed technical media to such perfection that the arts should by now be literally made for millions, available to millions, and should be by millions appreciated, the facts are sadly otherwise. Technical development has increased the barrier between artist and performer; more hear and fewer have the time, the ability, or the education to understand; the sense of responsibility of performers has lessened as their responsibilities have increased; the obligations of the audience are ignored, though intelligent audience-participation is more and more possible.

The editor of *Music Magazine* puts part of the case thus, in his article on Radio Music: "If this vast new public for music is to benefit from its discovery of a new world, it is vitally necessary that it should soon possess proper standards of value. . . . That the sponsors of music in this country should have been able to impose the "Warsaw Concerto" on the public as a work of musical

art is an indictment of our present-day system of criticism and a significant warning for the future."

"An indictment of our present-day system of criticism"—and of our sponsors, our audiences, our performers, and our public. The principal consolation in *Made for Millions* is that so many intelligent critics should be so disappointed and so determined to shake readers from complacency. (A minor and, for a Penguin editor, more personal consolation, is that Mrs. Margaret Cole, writing on Books, is the only contributor who feels content with the achievement of this century.)

If there were more George Sampsons among our educators, the necessary gloom of *Made for Millions* might be dissipated.

J. E. MORPURGO

*Music and Reason: The Basis of Listening, Composing, and Assessing.* Charles T. Smith. Watts & Co. 7s. 6d. net.

Since it is about music, this is an unusual book. Had it dealt with any of the other fine arts, it would probably not have been regarded as very surprising. But music has been so closely associated with church services and romanticised by popular novelists, that it is edged about with vague ideas of divinity and inspiration.

Mr. Smith, who has done remarkable work in London's East End training schoolchildren of seven to thirteen years to perform *The Magic Flute* and other operas, writes from a rationalist point of view. He is severe upon the flowery speech in which Sir Walford Davies used to indulge, but actually both have something in common. Mr. Smith maintains that all of us, if trained early enough and properly, would be able to compose passable music. Sir Walford Davies did much to encourage schoolchildren to make up tunes of their own.

Mr. Smith presents three main propositions:

(i) "Great music can be understood and appreciated only by those who listen with the ear of reason."

(ii) "Music is great, and what is termed 'inspired' only in so far as those who compose it use their reason."

(iii) "Only by the exercise of reason can it be decided whether music is great or not."

There is a great deal of truth in these contentions, but in the present state of knowledge of the musical faculty, they are surely rather too sweeping. Music, certainly, cannot be fully appreciated without the use of the intellect, but one cannot ignore the appeal to the emotions and the senses. Beethoven, everyone will agree, needed immense intellectual power to build up his symphonies, and in his notebooks to hammer out themes until they assumed their right form. Nevertheless, Beethoven himself maintained that some of his ideas seemed to come to him without any conscious volition on his part, and of his Mass in D he said: "From the heart it has come, to the heart it must go."

STANLEY BAYLISS

*Chopin.* Arthur Hedley. Dent: The Master Musicians Series.  
7s. 6d. net.

With perfect equanimity and a great deal of factual evidence, Mr. Hedley has striven, with much success, to prove that the information supplied by Schumann, Liszt, and Niecks, hitherto relied upon by the majority of Chopin's biographers, was, in fact, inaccurate and unreliable; in this connection it is of interest to note that Grove (1936) states "Professor Niecks's *Life* is thoroughly trustworthy." Mr. Hedley classifies his bibliography into (1) Works of Bibliographical Importance, (2) Principal Works relating to Chopin as a Composer, and (3) Other Works. Of the twenty-four volumes in category (1), some half-dozen only are available to the English reader, who therefore cannot be otherwise than grateful for the results of the author's research into the Polish, German, and French literature on the subject. Cuthbert Hadden's Biography (1903, revised 1934, and which presumably this new volume replaces in "The Master Musicians Series") is relegated to category (3). Dipping into Hadden after having read Hedley is astonishing, for the former appears to abound in the myths and fallacies which the latter is at pains to strangle for all time.

There is much to commend this convincing and seemingly authoritative volume, although the biographical pages are of con-

siderably more importance than the discussions of the music, which might well have been expanded and made less like programme notes.

The author has great ability in imparting important information without fuss in the general body of the text, and also makes some very able "pen-portraits." It is interesting, for example, to know that Chopin honoured Zywny (his first teacher) with a Polonaise in A flat major for the latter's birthday in 1821, the which was "published in a barbarous transcription in 1902"; that Chopin was legally a Russian subject; whilst the phrase "Liszt's effusive urbanity" well reveals his character—at least, to those readers who consider the old man to have been a prodigious charlatan!

Mr. Hedley's thoughtfully presented and well-considered opinion upon the George Sand episode should once and for all place her in the proper light, which undoubtedly is that of an extremely capable woman to whom Chopin, and indeed his family in Poland, were tremendously indebted, certainly from 1839 to 1846, and in all probability for a considerably longer period. She who was regarded in England with "peculiar horror," and of course appeared in that reactionary journal *Punch* as a figure "waving the banner of Socialism and Revolution," may have commenced life with him as a lover in the accepted sense of the word, but certainly ended up by being a veritable mother to him; it was because his life for those years was uneventful "that his spiritual and mental life was free to develop unhindered," during which time "his genius came to a splendid maturity in an almost unbroken series of masterpieces, nearly all of which were written at Nohant."

There are two unpublished letters, extracts from other little-known letters, and a reproduction of a hitherto unpublished sketch by Kiviatkowski given to Camille Pleyel, Chopin's beloved friend and helper, which will make the book of great interest to the more specialised student.

Chopin's Polish Songs are interestingly alluded to at least three times, but we are then informed (p. 169) that "a knowledge of their period and of the original language is necessary for a proper appreciation of them"; that surely is for the reader to decide and

for Mr. Hedley, having whetted our appetites, to prove, and it is to be hoped that a subsequent edition of the book will include a chapter upon them.

There are an excessive number of phrases in brackets which give the impression of being afterthoughts, and Mr. Hedley is apt to overwork an effective phrase or favourite word, e.g. "fever of indecision," "cult," and so on, whilst there are some statements which lack style, such as "Liszt was very thick with the Countess d'Agoult"; and one queries how it was established that Chopin corrected his copies of Bach "modestly and fearfully." But these are tiny details over which the eye momentarily hesitates, and there is no gainsaying that this is a welcome and important biography likely to prove a standard work for the diligent amateur and an important jumping-off ground for the scholarly specialist.

GEORGE DANNATT

# NEW MUSIC

ROBIN HULL



HAYDN is commonly spoken of as a "great composer"; but this man of genius is often treated as Mozart's lackey. Consider the plight of any music-lover in England who wishes to study Haydn's life and work. If he turns to Grove's *Dictionary* (4th edition, 1940), what does he find? A queer hotchpotch of an article, brewed from scraps by C. F. Pohl and W. H. Hadow, hopelessly out-of-date, and rounded off by a valueless summary of Haydn's compositions. We can be sure, of course, that the fifth edition will rectify this, and much else besides; but meanwhile a fantastic situation remains. Nor is the music-lover in much better case when he searches for English books on Haydn. There are one or two introductory volumes, competent as far as they go, but none (at the time of writing) which sets out definitively the latest researches. The work of continental scholars is largely beyond reach owing to absence of translations. And much has yet to be done in the authoritative compilation of Haydn's output. As for the performance of his music—whether piano sonatas, string quartets, symphonies, or anything else—the neglect in England amounts to a major scandal.

It is true that the Third Programme has done much to present Haydn as a whole, but these broadcasts are inaccessible to many listeners, nor do they exonerate concert managements from a direct responsibility. The great range of Haydn's symphonies, for instance, is but partially explored, even by conductors who can be relied upon to do them full justice. It is a misfortune, too, that one of our most inescapable conductors is so plainly inept in eighteenth-century music that his attempts to deal with Haydn provide the last word in pedestrian fatuity.

Despite these and kindred perils, there is every reason for welcoming Haydn's Symphony No. 77 in B flat major which, under

the editorship of Alfred Einstein, is now printed for the first time in full score (Music Press Inc., New York, \$2.75). That circumstance remains astonishing, even when we recall Adam Carse's observation that not a single full score of any symphony was printed in the eighteenth century. But the printing of orchestral parts alone was common practice, and that is what happened in the case of Haydn No. 77. The parts were published by William Forster in London (1784); these, now preserved in the British Museum, are attested by Haydn himself.

The Symphony as a whole is "good Haydn," though the interest of its four movements is by no means equal. The first one (*Vivace*) shows little of the composer's usual boldness in argument; his modulations, for instance, are more orthodox than any belonging to Haydn's really adventurous developments. The Minuet is trenchant and spirited, refreshing in its vigour, even if it lacks the elevation of style that marks the Haydn minuets at their finest. The Finale is a brilliant Rondo, one that brings to mind Haydn's mood in the last movement of the "Oxford" (No. 92), and not far removed from that movement in quality. But it is the *Andante sostenuto* of No. 77 that most truly proclaims a mind of genius. There can be no shadow of doubt that this is one of the greatest slow movements Haydn ever wrote. Here one finds all the characteristics associated with his supremacy—the mastery of architecture, alike in the shaping of large-scale melody and the design as a whole, and that superb depth of beauty and sentiment for which Haydn seldom receives anything like adequate recognition. Even if No. 77 in B flat major had little else to offer—and it has a great deal—the work would be memorable indeed for a slow movement of such consummate inspiration.

It is a strange contrast to turn from Haydn's strength of character to the amiable fluency of the Trio-Sonata in D minor, Op. 2, No. 4, by Jean Baptiste Loeillet (Music Press Inc., New York, \$2.75). The editor, Alfred Mann, reminds us that this Sonata belongs to a set of twelve, each for three instruments, published about 1725 by Walsh in London. The present version is intended for recorder, oboe, and keyboard, with an *ad libitum* part for 'cello or bassoon. But various alternatives are suggested:

flute or violin in place of recorder; violin instead of oboe. The four movements will have great charm for anyone unfamiliar with the musical commonplaces of the period. Others may feel inclined to regret Loeillet's easy-going reliance upon formulæ which do less than justice to his inventive gifts. The work is always polished and elegant, fairly easy to play, and about its social destination there can be no question whatever.

This Sonata is foredoomed for employment as "incidental music" to one of those amateur plays which have an uncanny knack of grafting themselves on to village fêtes. I can see the whole thing—the creaking stage erected on beer-barrels inside a sweltering marquee; the impromptu curtain, whose vehement, inexplicable bouncings suggest the impact of prize-fighters behind the scenes; the scarlet-faced prompter who whispers, quite untruthfully, that "everything will be all right"; and, above all, the producer (a local æsthete run to seed), with frantic hair, vivid shirt, black corduroys, and an epicene demeanour most slanderingly described as B.B.C. by the coarser youths of the village. The curtain is finally wrenched aside by desperate hands, but not before the tiny orchestra has played, over and over again, so excruciating an interpretation of the Largo from Loeillet's Sonata that the sudden emergence of a stray cat from behind the 'cellist is received with complete equanimity by the audience.

Quite a different note must be struck for discussion of Lennox Berkeley's Sonata for Piano (J. and W. Chester, Ltd., 7s. 6d.). This is undoubtedly the finest work that Berkeley has produced up till now, and adds greatly to his importance as composer. The Sonata is dedicated to Clifford Curzon. It is a sound principle, I think, that gratuitous bouquets should not pass freely between critics and artists—not that critics are in much danger of receiving them!—nor would any artist of real eminence welcome such a practice. But it is a matter of common justice to say that Clifford Curzon has done this Sonata an invaluable service by including it regularly in his programmes, and thus setting a splendid example of initiative which others would do well to follow.

Certainly his practical faith in the Sonata rests upon an excellent foundation. The four movements have a strength and con-

tinuity of purpose executed with unfailing effect. There is, too, a new intensity about Berkeley's invention in these pages, an increased breadth of style, and a depth of emotion beyond any that he has yet revealed. These factors attain a special importance when taken in conjunction with the clarity of style and argument that Berkeley commands. The first movement (*Moderato*) gives striking evidence of the succinct, vigorous thought that informs the Sonata as a whole. The music is spacious, yet tautly reasoned, and rich in creative imagination. It is apt that so powerful a movement should be followed by a relatively light *Presto*, though this contrast implies no relaxation of the composer's grip upon his material. The *Adagio* is deeply reflective, concentrated within three pages, and sustains real profundity throughout its course. The Finale (*Introduction-Allegro*) has exactly the weight needed to balance the entire design. This Sonata needs first-rate playing, but its demands are justified on grounds that go far beyond the brilliant writing integral to the invention.

The general standard of music for viola and piano by British composers is remarkably high. This is partly because the majority of these works have been specially written for very gifted artists—such as Lionel Tertis and Bernard Shore—and the certainty of good performance can be a potent stimulus to the creative faculties. The *Capriccioso*, for viola and piano, by John Wray (O.U.P., 7s.), is modest in scope, but admirably suited to its purpose, and will reward the capable playing that it requires. The composer sets out his material with ample skill, though his harmonic resource might well be more venturesome, and a stronger sense of individuality would have been welcome. Robin Milford's *Fantasia in B minor*, for string quartet (O.U.P., 5s. 6d.), impels a similar observation as regards slenderness of character in the invention. The early pages promise more, indeed, than the work as a whole has to offer, and the *Fantasia* surrenders increasingly to what is competent rather than imaginative thought. Though nowhere striking to any great depth, the music can none the less claim an elegiac feeling which shows considerable sensitivity. Its neatness of expression may prove attractive to the players themselves, even if listeners find that their anticipations are never quite fulfilled.

Few orchestral works of recent times have enjoyed a more well-deserved success than E. J. Moeran's *Sinfonietta* (Novello, price unmarked), of which an excellent near-miniature score is now published. The *Sinfonietta* provides a capital instance of a work that won cordial opinions at the outset, and whose significance has been confirmed in the light of later performances. It was widely recognised from the first that what seem to be occasional (though of course unconscious) echoes of Sibelius are purely incidental to a composition whose cardinal individuality is beyond dispute. Still, it is a point of elementary fairness to pin down what may strike the listener as Sibelian affinities, even if these amount to singularly little, and thus give the chapter and verse to which any composer is entitled. It must suffice here to mention two examples. The first comes at Figure 12 (first movement) where the woodwind phrases, whose material has already been introduced, crystallise in a manner which Sibelius has certainly made familiar. The second occurs at Figure 56 (third movement) where the following run of semi-quavers may bring to mind a feature of the Sibelian method, though, one need scarcely add, nothing of any manner or matter except Moeran's own. The cumulative effect of such affinities strikes me as almost negligible, and worth mentioning only because these points, if evident at first hearing, require that the perceptive listener shall place them in correct perspective. For the rest, there is little need to stress the resounding originality of a work whose fame has become established far outside our own country. The "Theme and Variations" (second movement) have a richness and resource whose imaginative eloquence has seldom been exceeded by any composer in recent times. And the *Sinfonietta*, taken as a whole, proves yet again that, in the expression of sheer beauty, Moeran can bring to bear an inspiration reaching supreme heights.

# GRAMOPHONE COMMENTARY

RALPH HILL



I AM afraid that I start in rather a tangle. In his last article Alec Robertson decided to write about what the gramophone companies ought to record instead of about what they have recorded. The consequence is that I am hopelessly in arrears, and don't know where to start or to finish. I propose, then, merely to pick some of the ripest fruit from the enormous basket!

First, a word about Decca. I suppose there is no doubt that this company leads the way for the time being in quality of orchestral recording, but it does not appear to be able to maintain a consistent quality of performance. There seems to be no carefully prepared musical policy: works seem to be recorded haphazardly, of which some are well performed and others badly. Metaphorically speaking, the net is cast into the sea, and then up it comes with some fine halibut and juicy soles floundering among a mass of wriggling whiting and inedible ocean vermin. Unfortunately, the law of libel forbids me to name the conductors and so-called artists, whose performances are as flavourless as whiting or as nauseating as some ocean vermin. The inference to be drawn from this is that Decca does not know the difference in taste between a sole and a whiting. If this be true, it is a tragic state of affairs, because starting with a clean slate Decca could make a really vital and planned contribution to recorded music, which would have lasting value.

However, Decca is issuing from time to time on ten-inch discs some wholly admirable French and German songs, among which I specially recommend Gerard Souzay's beautiful singing of four examples of Fauré's exquisite art: *En Sourdine* and *Après un Rêve*, *Arpège*, and *Clair de Lune*. Hans Hotter has a baritone voice of velvet quality and exceptionally clear diction; he excels in the quiet, slow, and expressive lyrical song, such as Schumann's *Wer machte dich so krank* and *Alte Laute*, two beautiful but

neglected songs from Op. 35 (Col.). He is less successful in the rather forceful *Die Beiden Grenadiere*. Aksel Schiotz is another fine singer, and his performance of Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* (H.M.V.), with Gerald Moore on the top of his form, is a set of records to be treasured. Kirsten Flagstad has a phenomenal voice, both in range and quality, but the (H.M.V.) recording of her performance of Weber's Ocean, *Thou Mighty Monster* does not do her voice justice—the effect is “enclosed” and “tinny,” which makes this feeble aria sound more monstrous than ever. Paola Silveri gives a notable and dramatic performance of the *Credo* from Verdi's *Otello* (Col.). If you want some coloratura singing of a very pure and agile kind, I recommend Jennie Tourel in the Rondo from Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (Col.). I was not so impressed with her singing when I heard her in the flesh at the Albert Hall, but she is first-rate on this record. Every note of the runs and embellishments that abound in this aria is crystal clear and given its right value.

The film companies are to be congratulated on their policy of securing the services of first-rate composers to write music for important films, but I am sure the gramophone companies are doing the wrong thing in recording selections of this music. Take, for example, John Ireland's music from *The Overlanders* (Decca) and Lord Berners's music from *Nicholas Nickleby* (Col.). The music as recorded is far too “bitty” and formless; it would have been more sensible to have commissioned the composers to turn the music into properly designed suites. It is interesting to note, by the way, how both composers use simpler and more orthodox harmony and clear-cut lengths of melody when writing for the films. Ireland, however, makes few concessions to popular taste, while Berners goes the whole hog. Vulgar and trivial as some of Berners's music may be, it is brilliantly turned out. It is amusing to think of the smart, highbrow, parodist Berners playing the boys of Charing Cross Road at their own game, and doing it with assured easiness as if he had been at it all his life!

Owing to the success of the film of *Henry V*, H.M.V. have issued four records of excerpts from the play recited superbly by Sir Laurence Olivier, with appropriate excerpts from Walton's

film music played by the Philharmonia Orchestra under Walton himself. Now that we have an opportunity to concentrate on the music without visual hindrance, the ingenuity and imagination of the composer is doubly apparent. The battle of Agincourt is magnificently done.

It would appear that Hollywood has done its damnedest to make and break Yehudi Menuhin. He now enjoys the nauseating hero-worship of the film fan, whose café standards of violin playing will be the yardstick for his measure. Yehudi combines with his sister Hephzibah in one of the most abominable performances (H.M.V.) of Brahms's great Sonata in D minor for violin and piano that I have ever heard. The reading of the Menuhins is finicky and childlike. We need go no further than the phrasing, the rhythms of which are chopped up into bar lengths in the style of a couple of rhythm boys beating it out. There is little or no sense of the melodic curve, the end of which is usually clipped with a fascinatin' lack of taste on the part of both performers. The reproduction of violin tone on the E and A strings is too piercing and strident. The playing of the last movement, *presto agitato*, is the best of a bad lot.

Taste and impeccable musicianship characterise the playing of the Hungarian String Quartet, which gives a superlative performance of Mozart's Quartet in D minor, K.421 (H.M.V.). The playing is taut and tense and beautifully proportioned, and the reading strikes a happy balance between the severe classical and wayward romantic conceptions of the significance of Mozart's music. Again I find that the recording of the first violin in the top register *fortissimo* is too strident. I have never noticed this fault when listening to the Hungarians in person.

Alceo Galliera is unquestionably the best of the post-war new conductors from abroad. He exhibits taste, style, and control in everything I have heard him do. He conducts the Philharmonia Orchestra (Col.) in two outstanding recordings: Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and Strauss's *Don Juan*, which has poetry, breadth, and impact. There is some soft and persuasive flute playing in Debussy's *Prélude*, and the climaxes are carefully and effectively judged. The range of dynamics is remark-

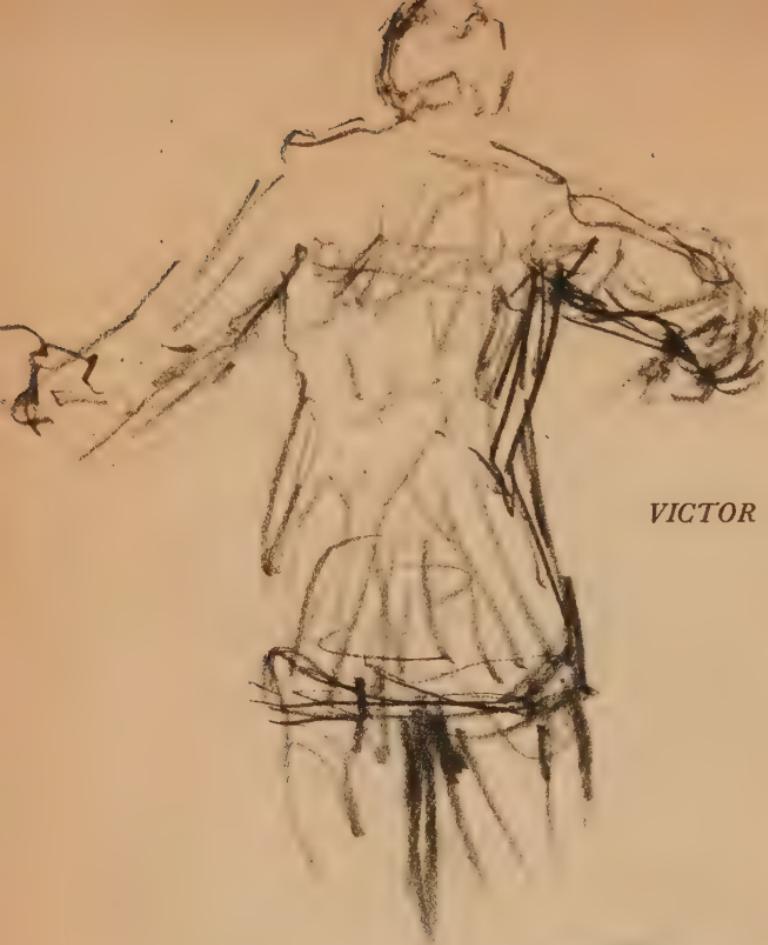
# AN ARTIST AMONG THE MUSICIANS

*A series of drawings by Milein Cosman, made  
at rehearsal and in the concert hall during 1947*

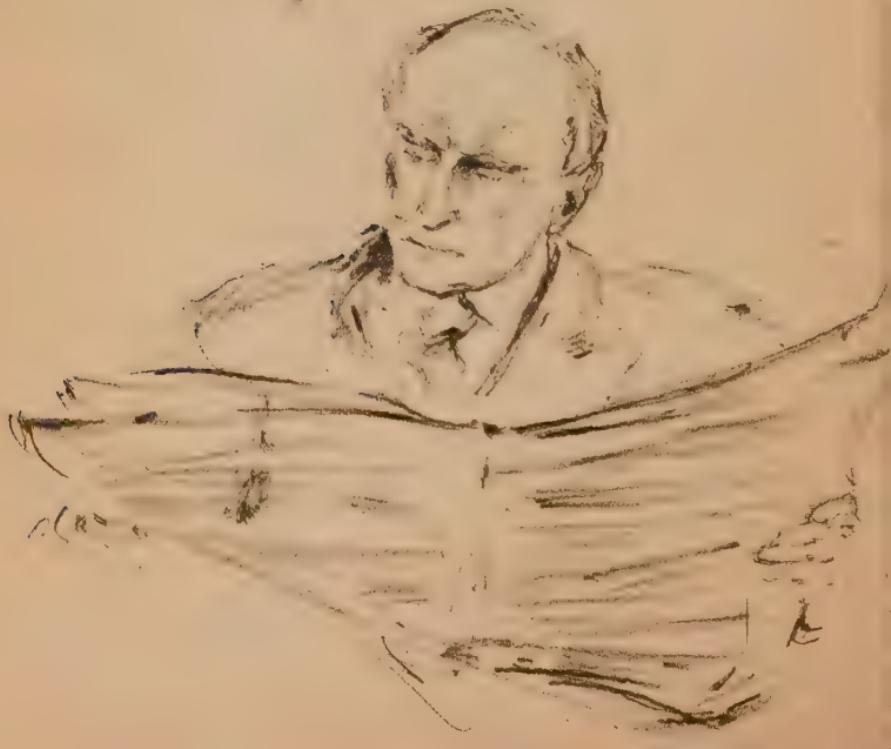


M. Cosman

CHARLES MUNCH



VICTOR DE SABATA





LIONEL TERTIS



FREDERICK THURSTON



ARCHIE CAMDEN

*Albert Hall Rehearsal*



JAMES BRADSHAW



*JEAN PUGNET*



GERALD MOORE



MARTIN LAWRENCE  
*as Don Pasquale*



MARKO ROTHMULLER  
*as Rigoletto*



*Glyndebourne Opera House, which is designed in the Tudor style in keeping with John Christie's beautiful adjacent mansion, is situated in one of the most lovely parts of the South Downs, near Lewes, Sussex*

*During the dinner interval the smartly gowned women and white-shirted men of the audience stroll round the luxuriant grounds. Here is the well-known musicologist and historian Cecil Gray with his wife*

# GLYNDEBOURNE

After six years of war the Glyndebourne Opera once again opened its doors in 1946 with the first performance of Benjamin Britten's opera *The Rape of Lucretia*. The 1947 season followed with a revival of Gluck's *Orfeo*, and the New English Opera Group gave the first performance of Britten's *Albert Herring*. The Glyndebourne Opera also produced Verdi's *Macbeth* and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Edinburgh Festival



## GLUCK'S *ORFEO*

Gluck's opera of Orpheus and Eurydice, based on the familiar Greek myth, was first produced in 1762. It was considered something of a revolutionary work, as it embraced certain new principles of musical and dramatic expression



KATHLEEN FERRIER  
as *Orfeo*



*Orfeo finds Euridice in Elysium. Euridice was sung by Ann Ayars*

# *ALBERT HERRING*

*Britten's third opera, which is described as a lyric comedy of Suffolk country life, is a setting of a libretto by Eric Crozier based on Maupassant's well-known short story Le Rosier de Madame Husson*



*Peter Pears as Albert Herring, the May King*



*Lady Billows (Joan Cross) learns that there is no village girl  
virtuous enough to be crowned May Queen.*



*Albert Herring humbly acknowledges his election as May King*

able. However, I would prefer the harp to be less precise and percussive in phrases that are intended to be persuasive. The Philharmonia Orchestra, with Dobrowen as conductor and Schnabel as soloist, give a clear-cut and vigorous performance of Beethoven's delightfully fresh and melodious Piano Concerto No. 2 (H.M.V.). Schnabel is as over-precise as an uncontrolled pianola. His anvil-like tonal effects are not in keeping with Beethoven's youthful style of piano writing. Benno Moiseiwitsch, with the same orchestra under Cameron, offers a good "ham" performance of Saint-Saëns's Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor (H.M.V.).

Decca sets a very high standard with a recording of Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloë Suites Nos. 1 and 2*, played by the fine Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, under Charles Münch. The same company's recording of Beethoven's Third Symphony is also very good. Sabata conducts the London Philharmonic Orchestra in a vital and well-proportioned performance, which is marred only by some rather sluggish wind playing. I have heard Sabata do strange things with Beethoven, but here he treats the score with respect and restrained emotion.

Decca and H.M.V. both issue Tchaikovsky's *Fantasy-Overture Romeo and Juliet*, the former by the National Symphony Orchestra under Albert Coates, the latter by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Beecham. There is no question of whose is the better. Coates makes next to nothing, while Beecham makes the most of this luscious and colourful music. Beecham's *Tapiola* of Sibelius with the same orchestra (H.M.V.) is less successful. I don't think that it is Beecham's fault. Nevertheless, he ought not to have passed a recording which is so rough and lacking in definition—the quality of wind tone is too often muddy and strident in *fortissimo* passages. A little gem of a symphony is Mozart's No. 33 in B flat, with its quaint finale. It is given a clean and rhythmical performance by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, under Herbert von Karajan (Col.).

In addition to a number of hackneyed small and large works for the piano, there is an excellent recording of Mussorgsky's *Pictures from an Exhibition*, played by Benno Moiseiwitsch (H.M.V.).

# MUSIC OF THE FILM

SCOTT GODDARD



ANYBODY going the round of London's flick theatres during July and August might have been excused for thinking that film music had become nothing but a whore. The subservience was horribly noticeable. Tears coursing down her raddled cheeks, she mopped and mowed in tune with every turn of the hoary old love situations on the screen. Like some obscene old bath attendant, she was always ready to turn on the heat at the nod of the producer. One hears of "the face on the cutting-room floor." This was the banana-skin on the pavement outside the cinema: one slipped and cursed. Why have music if that's all you do with it? With relief one went back to the Curzon, where *L'éternel retour* provided good unobtrusive music and restored the balance. And finally *The Loves of Joanna Godden* put film music high once more.

In the meantime, Bernard Stevens's music for *The Upturned Glass* was showing what an intelligent manipulation of music could produce in the way of emphasis and suggestion. This was, in fact, a right way of bending music to the producer's will. Viewed as a whole, the film had plenty of excellent silences. After the tepid wash of continual music in other films then showing, the effect of the first of these silences was dazzling. One realised that the music was being treated seriously, utilised with care, dispensed with if all it could do at a given moment would be to become a meaningless chit-chat. These silences were refreshing, and they gave fresh point to the music each time it recommenced. The opening accompaniment to the credit titles interested one immediately, suggesting that the film would have good music. But there remained the usual gnawing doubt as to how the problem would be solved by the producer. The solution was satisfactory.

*Time Out of Mind* I found musically null; but not void, for there was too much of it to be of the slightest artistic aid to the film, much too much, in any case, for my liking. Once again music had become the drab of Wardour Street, Hollywood or wherever, not because of any inherent weakness in the material provided by the composer, but because the tap wanted a new washer. However pure the water, a perpetual dribble becomes a nuisance.

In *The Loves of Joanna Godden* there were golden silences also. There were, too, beautiful lengths of almost static shots of marsh scenery, ideal for music. And the music for them is exquisite as well as wonderfully apt. Vaughan Williams is, as a film composer, best at moments such as these, where the action slackens into thought. He is, that is to say, at his best there at present; one has to qualify quickly when attempting to assess the æsthetic condition of a man who provably has a habit of springing surprises.

These still lengths carry the film, for they give opportunity for the deployment of its two finest characteristics, the music and the photography. Both are incomparably good, each supports the other, adding its special emphasis. The reeds in the Romney Marsh channels bend and recover while the music turns hither and thither its phrases which are often touchingly south country in shape, mood, flavour, and tang. The hideous outcrop of foot-and-mouth disease (and you need to have lived on the Marsh to know what that can be) has descriptive music, the first ever, and this too carries the picture. Here the music is peculiarly close to the camera, and it will be interesting to see, if we are allowed, whether this sequence can exist apart from the picture as a section of a concert suite.

Memory holds these photographic visions, and with them the music which might, I suppose, be termed photogenic, since it is as evocative as any shot. There is a fine spaciousness and dignity about it. And perhaps it should be said that in that it does the actual story-telling part of this film a positive disservice. For unfortunately Sheila Kaye-Smith's *Joanna Godden*, which was a tale having characters of appreciable strength, has gone all Dymchurch; the bungalow mentality has been allowed to smother the

story, with results as disgusting as the foot-and-mouth disease itself. The music can do nothing here but by its very integrity show up the cheapness of this version with its accent on "loves" rather than strength of character.

Things work out strangely. It looks as though Mr. Dalton will go down to fame as the man who undermined Carnegie Hall. With the present war between Hollywood and Whitehall just about to commence, there will be increasingly less of that type of gigantic gallimaufry of too many talents. Mercifully there will never be another Carnegie Hall film. But what are British producers going to provide? Something to take its box-office place? Some more *Lives of Great Composers*? They have the chance now either to do that and make music their slut or to produce sensible, sensitive musical documentaries. We shall wait, as Mr. Asquith's father once asked us to do, and see.

# MUSIC OVER THE AIR

STANLEY BAYLISS



COMPLAINTS are fashionable. After a successful and well-omened launching, the Third Programme is now coming under heavy fire. It is the apex of a triangle, the base angles of which are held by those who say it hasn't sufficient entertainment and those who want it to keep flying the standard of culture. What a pity that word resembles *Kultur*, something we presumably fought to destroy!

The complaint of lack of entertaining qualities does not come solely from those who are catered for by the Light Programme and who begrudge anyone enjoying what they themselves cannot enjoy. Quite a number of lovers of the highest in music must often wonder whether the Third Programme is not something of a museum, especially when one gets on successive evenings, first, Meyer's Music of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and, then, Goldsbrough's Eighteenth-century Chamber and Orchestral Music.

Much of that music is admirable, but its appeal is limited, and one can only enthuse over large doses of it if one happens to be a specialist in those periods. It has not the power of a complete performance of *Tristan and Isolda* or Berlioz's *The Trojans at Carthage*, which Sir Thomas Beecham so memorably broadcast.

This is really an old controversy which has been going on ever since the B.B.C., years ago, began an attempt to broadcast every one of Bach's cantatas. It is a conflict between the scholar and the æsthetete.

Let me give an illustration from the literary world. The Shakespearean scholar naturally welcomes an opportunity of seeing all the plays in the First Folio staged, but he who goes to Shakespeare for high poetic entertainment is not particularly desirous of sitting through a performance of *Titus Andronicus*. Lilian Baylis, I

believe, lived to boast that all the plays in the First Folio had been performed at the Old Vic; but many would rather she had given the best of Ben Jonson and others than the worst of Shakespeare. Moreover, it seems odd at this time of day that we should be given two programmes in which the six Brandenburg Concertos were given. There was a time when these did not make frequent appearances at concerts, but nowadays they may surely be heard quite regularly, so that the need for giving them in one large dose is not paramount. I must confess that I prefer programmes to be more varied, and suspect that often these one-man concerts occur because it is easier to write them down than to think out a well-balanced and satisfying diversity of composers.

It is sometimes enlightening to move outside professional circles, and I find that a great many people complain that some of the "Proms" have been broadcast on the Light Programme. Here is surely an instance where the music-lover may grant the justice of the non-music-lover's complaint. It makes one compare the timing and layout of the three daily programmes and question their wisdom. From the practical point of view, is it not to be deplored that on one evening the Home Service had Nevill Coghill's modernisation of Chaucer's *Prologue* and *Knight's Tale* and the Third Programme his version of Langland's *Piers Plowman*, albeit at 21.30 and 18.00 hours respectively? I have enjoyed both these features, but would not want to listen to both on the same day—but there! "A" can listen at 18.00 hours and not at 21.30, while "B" can manage 21.30 and not 18.00 hours. Those who like neither will inevitably grumble that the B.B.C. favour the few and not the many!

The B.B.C. have also been having trouble with the Hallé Orchestra and the Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers over fees. I am the last person to deny that fees should be adequate and just; but these matters really bring up the far greater problem of the B.B.C.'s monopoly of broadcasting. Their income is based upon money received from licences, and therefore there is a fixed amount to be shared out among a multiple of interests. Would the coming of programmes sponsored by advertisers bring increased fees for composers and artists? The answer is almost

certainly yes, even considering the small size of Great Britain in comparison with the immensity of the United States.

But would it not favour the established composer and performer at the expense of the newcomer? The commercial N.B.C. built up a first-class symphony orchestra, it is true; but it favours such great names as Toscanini; and under such a system would the contemporary composer be as generously treated as he often is by the B.B.C.? It was interesting to note that this point was made by a young writer in a letter to the Press soon after the dispute between the B.B.C. and the Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers had been publicised. It is argued that sponsored programmes would bring livelier presentations, but I must confess that, after listening to American broadcasts during the war years, I prefer our own staid announcements of symphony concerts as being less incongruous and out of keeping.

One other item of broadcasting policy which I feel musicians don't consider is the effect on them of progress in television. Will it sweep away a large number of musicians as did the talkies when they took the place of the silent film? Like Stravinsky, I believe the sight of a symphony orchestra in action gives pleasure and adds to the enjoyment of music. But does it make a satisfactory spectacle for the television camera? Would it not mean the dodging about from group to group that we have in talkie films of orchestras, and does that not induce an atmosphere of restlessness? It is arguable, therefore, that television may bring a reduction in the number of symphony and chamber music concerts and an increase in the broadcasting of musical spectacles, such as ballet and opera.

One of our most distinguished visitors has been Paul Hindemith, for whom the B.B.C. arranged a miniature festival, the composer himself conducting two orchestral concerts. He brought with him some new works, and it was interesting to see what effect residence in the United States had had on him. During the war I had to write an article on composers who had found inspiration in Walt Whitman, and then I could have had no idea that Hindemith would one day be added to their number. Of his new works the most notable was the Prelude to *When Lilacs Last*, a choral setting of Whitman that may be regarded as a kind of American

Requiem. This Prelude suggested that the complete work must be as fitting an elegy for the fallen of the Second World War as Arthur Bliss's *Morning Heroes* was for those who fell in the First.

Hindemith was once regarded solely as an advocate and writer of *Gebrauchmusik* (utility music); yet during this festival we had proof that even his music written for special occasions might have a genuine emotional appeal. It may be remembered that Hindemith was engaged to play at a B.B.C. symphony concert, when George V died. The B.B.C. had to make new arrangements hurriedly, and Hindemith sat down and wrote in a few hours a work for the occasion. Hearing this Funeral Music for George V for viola and strings almost a dozen years later, one is astounded by the genius of the man. It was clear that its appeal was not due to the adventitious association of a king's death.

I did not care for the other new work, *Symphonica serena*. That sounded angular and savoured of sheer note-spinning. Nevertheless, as Hindemith does not write in a facile idiom and yet has an immense output, one cannot help being astonished at his consistency.

Sir Adrian Boult and the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra have been visiting Paris, Brussels, and The Hague, and surely proved a good advertisement for English music. Their programmes were ideal, being made up of classical works, examples of the composers of the nations they were visiting, and our own leading composers. Listening to the broadcast from The Hague, I was sorry that it ended with Delius's *Song of Sunrise*, because as the Dutch announcer was saying good-night to us, the concert could be heard continuing with the *Enigma Variations*. What was the Dutchman's gain was the Englishman's loss!

# OPERA IN LONDON

STEPHEN WILLIAMS



THIS is an age of ironical contrasts. The country that won the war is writhing under privations that have driven some people to ask why she bothered to win it; her young men and women, like liberated prisoners, have been dashing away to defeated countries for their holidays in order to get a few square meals and a few drinks and smokes at reasonable prices; John Citizen, formerly looked up to as the salt of the earth, is browbeaten and insulted by shopkeepers, publicans, taxi-drivers, and bus-conductors; and finally we had the Government calling on everyone for an honest working effort, while "spivs" were written up in the newspapers as glamorously as were the Chicago gangsters, instead of being exposed and pilloried for the scum that they were.

What has this to do with opera? Well, it may have a great deal. Music, being an exact art, has little hope of survival in a world that seems in a fair way to turn itself upside-down and inside-out. Moreover, in the official mind, music is a luxury, and when the ship is in danger, luxuries are thrown overboard. For the official mind is usually incapable of grasping that the arts of music and literature are the shortest and most reliable cuts to the art of living. Wasn't it Wilde who said (I quote from memory): "Give me the luxuries of life and you may keep the necessities"? We must take care that in economic crises the "luxuries" are not crowded out by the "necessities." It is also relevant to opera, because conditions of ironical contrast seem to be showing in opera also. Take Glyndebourne, for instance: on the first night of the second post-war season we had Gluck's *Orfeo*, on the second night Britten's *Albert Herring*. Now, as these two works are quite incapable of comparison, there is no point in exalting either at the expense of the other. Uncle Toby Shandy opened the window to let out a fly saying (again I quote from memory), "There is room

in this world for thee and me, brother"; and undoubtedly there is room for Uncle Christoph Willibald and such a queer fish as Albert Herring. Nevertheless, the contrast undoubtedly struck with some force.

Carl Ebert's production of *Orfeo* was a production of shining beauty. It preserved the serene dignity of the work, and yet persuaded us at the same time that these were human hearts beating to the rhythm of the love that is stronger than death. This rhythm was subtly emphasised by Fritz Stiedry and the orchestra, and framed, as it were, by the magically suggestive designs of Carl Joseph, whose scene in Hades reminded us of those immense vistas of torment and desolation pictured by Doré in his illustrations to the *Inferno*. It was emphasised also by Kathleen Ferrier as Orpheus, whose singing achieved the perfect balance between sculptured shapeliness and emotional warmth. *Che Faro* was not only the lament of a lover, but the music of a passing bell mourning the death of all lovely things, the perfume that lingers when the rose has withered. Ann Ayars, the Euridice, also conveyed this sense of something universal in her grief and passion: she was every woman bewildered in the belief that love has turned from her.

*Albert Herring* is—may I be forgiven the irresistible metaphor—a different kettle of fish altogether. Here we have a Maupassant story translated, obviously with much gleeful relish, by Eric Crozier, to a Suffolk village. The authorities want to crown a May Queen, but no girl can be found whose virtue justifies such an honour (presumably they require a Virgin Queen). So they decide to have a May King, and choose Albert Herring, son of the greengrocer's widow, the strength of whose purity is partly explained by the weakness of his intellect. Albert, pitifully embarrassed by the whole silly business, grabs the prize money and goes off on a glorious debauch which, in the accepted phrase, "makes a man of him" and frees him from Mother's apron-strings. This schoolboyish "lark" is set by Benjamin Britten to sparkling and ingenious music that is sometimes witty, sometimes idyllic—as in the haunting beauty of the scene where Albert watches the lovers passing down the moonlit street—and some-

times merely facetious. Parts of it seem almost like a burlesque of "grand opera," the characters occasionally declaiming the most absurdly commonplace remarks to thunderous operatic heroics. This kind of thing has of course been a stock joke of the music-halls for generations. But in the *heiligen Hallen* of Glyndebourne it had the force of a rather naughty novelty, and was pounced on with delighted cries by an audience of London's musical intelligentsia, who knew about as much of the inside of a music-hall as of the inside of a disorderly house—perhaps even less—and whose most hilarious experience hitherto of musical joking was probably the Andante of Haydn's *Surprise Symphony*. Joan Cross was richly, almost boisterously, humorous as the local Lady Bountiful, Peter Pears gave Albert a really human and appealing personality, and there were good character sketches—none of them overdone—by Gladys Parr, Margaret Ritchie, Norman Lumsden, and others. In short, we all enjoyed ourselves immensely, and agreed that if it was not great opera, it was at least good fun. So now that Britten has got this out of his system, we wait for something worthier of his exceptional powers.

*Turandot* and *Il Trovatore* were perhaps the best productions of the Covent Garden English season, certainly the boldest and most vigorous. And unless such operas are tackled boldly and vigorously, they turn and defeat the tacklers. If you are walking through a field of bulls and walk with purpose and resolution, they will make way for you; the moment you show hesitation or fear, they will take advantage of it. So with operas of this heroic stature: the singers must act and sing like heroes, even if their hearts are in their boots. Well, they tackled boldly and won. *Turandot*, amid settings of grotesque, barbaric magnificence by Leslie Hurry, was a most satisfying achievement. Here, in spite of occasional rough edges, we had Grand Opera as we are accustomed to think of it. Walter Midgley was the Calaf, and although nature has not given him a voice on the heroic scale, art did everything to persuade us that she had. The Turandot was, of course, Eva Turner. I say "of course," because it is impossible to imagine any other English soprano so dominating the scene and flinging out those great streamers of tone with such confidence and

majesty. In the big unison phrases of Act II, for instance, Turandot completely drowned the Prince's thunder—a clear case of piracy on the high C's.

*Trovatore* also was convincing, mainly because the singers seemed to believe, heart and soul, in its fire-and-brimstone melodramatics and attacked them with a blazing sincerity which was infectious. For once we forgot the opera's occasional absurdities. The outstanding performance came from Edith Coates, who seemed on fire throughout the evening, and whose singing constantly showered sparks of brilliance. She is, without any qualification at all, a great Azucena. I admired also the Count di Luna of Jess Walters—a dark, cavernous voice, a forceful dramatic instinct, and an impressive demeanour. Here indeed was the Villain in Love, an ill-starred, saturnine creature driven by his passions "like a ship in a black storm." His only fault was to try here and there to transpose the key a semitone down. One could hardly blame him, for the tessitura is sometimes cruelly high—so many Italian baritone parts seem to have been written for tenors in reduced circumstances—but he would have been wiser to arrange beforehand for the orchestra to co-operate with him. Arthur Carron, the Manrico, proved, most unfortunately, one of these tenors in reduced circumstances. It is a fine and ample voice, yet on this occasion it sounded curiously monochromic, curiously lacking in "ring." It was either this—though I cannot think it an adequate reason—or some purely personal animosity that led to audible disapproval from the house at the final curtain. This demonstration produced a "front-page story" the next morning, which was tantamount to punishing a man twice over, and was not, I thought, greatly to the credit of British journalism. It is a painful and embarrassing experience to see an artist "get the bird" and one which most of us prefer to forget as quickly as possible. It seems to me rather gratuitously "rubbing it in" for the Press to make a song about it because the singer has failed to do so.

# BALLET IN LONDON

ARNOLD HASKELL



THE name of de Basil, who returned to Covent Garden after eight years, had become a legend to the vast numbers of new ballet lovers who talked of symphonic ballet, Toumanova, Baronova, and Riabouchinska, as their predecessors had done of *Schéhérazade*, Karsavina, Nijinsky, and Lopokova.

And for that very reason de Basil had a great handicap with which to contend. Legends fall far short of reality, and also in the meantime we ourselves had built a great company and a tradition and had recently seen the exciting novelties of the Champs Élysées Ballet. Moreover, unlike Diaghilev, the Colonel enjoyed no monopoly, but had been handled roughly in the United States, where the Press suggested that he had reached rock bottom.

Wisely de Basil realised that a successful London season represented his unique chance of survival, and formed a new company for the purpose. He possessed one trump card in Serge Grigoriev, stage director with Diaghilev since the invention of the Russian Ballet formula. Grigoriev carries the repertoire in his head and also the secret of turning a polyglot company into Russian dancers through the use of a mixture of languages, all of which manage to sound like Russian and which for some mysterious reason are understood.

Few survive of the original company, but those few are invaluable: Lichine and Riabouchinska, Morosova, Moulin, a baby in 1939, Jasinsky, Hoyer and Bell, the two last after service on many war fronts.

To this original Russian Ballet nucleus have been added some strong elements; Renée Jeanmaire, a Lifar discovery, as sparkling and vital as that other great French invention, champagne; Moussia Larkina, half Russian, half American Indian, and entirely ballet russe; a trio of superb male dancers in the true Slav

tradition; Dokoudovski, Orlov Reznik, and Skouratov. Other talents have emerged as the season progresses.

But what of the repertoire and its interpretation?

The most difficult of all ballets to revive are Fokine's two studies in romanticism, *Les Sylphides* and *Carnaval*. They immediately reveal the artistic possibilities of a company in a manner that no contemporary's work can do. Not unnaturally, under these circumstances, both failed to be convincing. In *Les Sylphides* Renée Jeanmaire, who has wit and personality and true intelligence, was totally miscast, though she has continued to improve, and Larkina showed a true conception of dancing, but is still uncontrolled and not very strong technically. Jasinsky came nearer to Fokine's ideal, and all that really remained was the very moving interpretation by Riabouchinska of the prelude. The *corps de ballet* was well drilled, but as Diaghilev always said, there should be no *corps de ballet* in *Les Sylphides*, but an ensemble of finished dancers.

*Carnaval* suffered still more. It is a delicate work depending on style and characterisation. Olga Morosova's Columbine had all her natural vivacity and avoided the common fault of archness. Dokoudovsky's Harlequin was really well danced and mimed; but for the rest we had too many toothy grins, and though it may be a tiresome thing to say, one could only sigh for the days of Tchernicheva and Schollar.

The novelty to London was *Graduation Ball*, first produced in Australia in 1940. This ballet, by David Lichine, is decorated by Alexandre Benois, and its music from Johann Strauss is selected and arranged by Antal Dorati. Many critics have allowed themselves to be misled by the title into thinking that this is an American work. Nothing could be further from the truth, and I am always on the look-out for the Americanisation that is ruining Russian Ballet.

The choreographer worked in very close collaboration with Benois, and this is an essentially European scene, to which much careful detail has gone. Its humour is the humour of all light Russian ballet, and if a little obvious, it is never obtrusive or flamboyant.

There were many admirable performances in this work, among them Lichine himself with Riabouchinska; a delightful newcomer, Barbara Lloyd, who makes her début on any stage; Orloff's Drummer Boy, and John Taras's General—the type of General who is indispensable at any Russian wedding. The smooth running of *Graduation Ball* and its mass of carefully worked-out detail showed how essential it is for the choreographer to be on the spot to rehearse and polish his own work.

*Les Présages* remains a mighty fresco, a classic to-day of pure choreography, and even though Grigoriev has reproduced it remarkably well, perhaps from the point of view of pattern better than Massine himself could have done, much of the sharp detail is missing. Action, for instance, though the dancer Komarova is very capable, was a total loss. Moulin, in Baronova's great rôle, never suggested anything more than a very fine dancer, and only Riabouchinska and Lichine in their own created rôles could show us the real thing that we remember so well. Yet in the last movement the *corps de ballet* excelled itself in its precision. It was perhaps more precise than the pre-war *corps de ballet*, but then, in those days every member of the ensemble had the ability to become a soloist.

It was, I feel, a mistake to produce *Paganini* on the first night. For the most part this is a tawdry piece of stock romanticism only redeemed by its second scene, which gives us some moments of Fokine at his finest and simplest. Tatiana Riabouchinska excels herself in the rôle she created, and it was of her in this rôle that the late Victor Dandré, Pavlova's husband, said that she reminded him of Pavlova, a compliment that I cannot remember his having paid a dancer before.

As the beginning of a new company this has been remarkably successful, and it would be ungracious to refer too much to the past, but it must only be thought of as a beginning. True, many mistakes that should have been avoided have been made, the most glaring of all being the putting on of a ballet called *Le Beau Danube* with choreography by Serge Lifar, which was in fact a vulgarisation of a work that was a little masterpiece.

There is a fight between New York and Paris for the future of

Russian Ballet. We have seen from the Ballets des Champs-Élysées what interesting ideas still abound in the city that gave Diaghilev his chief inspiration from the earliest years until his death. For too long now has Russian Ballet been living on its capital, too busy touring and being made the plaything of American impresarios who think they have achieved a triumph if they can line up one-night stands in Joplin, Mo., or Salinas. In such circumstances it has been quite impossible to create new works, to develop artists, or to meet those painters and musicians indispensable to the life of ballet.

To-day Russian Ballet is on its trial, everyone will wish it well. The many fine national movements that have grown up in recent years need the example of one such travelling company.

# CONCERTS IN LONDON

BY  
GEORGE DANNATT



PONDERING over programmes, notes and impressions obtained during the three months' period under review, one cannot fail to realise how few good concerts there are in London from the end of the "season" in April to the commencement of the Promenade Concerts towards the end of July. During those intervening months of 1947, most concert-goers and surely all concert-critics will have praised Euterpe for her timely abdication in favour of a temporary visit from Apollo; only those who journeyed to Hampton Court for the Orangery Concerts or were fortunate enough to visit the Glyndebourne Opera or the Cambridge Music Festival will have been able to worship the latter in his dual capacity as God of Sun and Song. But whether Apollo visits London or not, the foreign visitor and English holidaymaker do, and are anxious to hear our music, and our orchestras "live"; how delightful it would be if one could add, in the *concert halls* of this capital city.

During these somewhat musically bleak months, however, there are occasional concerts of great vitality and interest. Such a one, of unaccompanied choral music, was given by the Oriana Madrigal Society. Their recital satisfied most of the requirements of a good programme; the items were well balanced and carefully chosen, and included traditional songs, madrigals, sacred music and contemporary part-songs. The music was well rehearsed, beautifully and enthusiastically sung without fuss or showmanship. Some of the music presented was of outstanding importance, such as Vaughan Williams's *O Vos Omnes* for the Office of Tenebrae, and Edmund Rubbra's *Kyrie* and *Gloria* from the *Missa Cantuariensis* for double choir. The words for the deeply moving Vaughan Williams excerpt are from the Office for Maundy Thursday; at this Holy Week celebration candles are lighted at the beginning of the service and extinguished one by one after each psalm, in

memory of the darkness at the time of the Crucifixion. Having previously been unaware of this ritual, it occurs to me that Haydn, as a devout Christian who knew his Church Feasts, probably obtained his idea for the *Farewell Symphony* from the celebration of this office.

The Vaughan Williams and Rubbra were both extraordinarily individual conceptions, and so too, in their own way, were the four Troubadour Songs of Bernart de Ventadorn. The soloist in these works was one of the members of the choir, Kathleen Ewart, who possesses a rich contralto voice and a distinguished interpretative ability; in the Troubadour Songs she was sympathetically accompanied on the recorder by Edgar Hunt.

There are certain branches of music which, almost inevitably, one tends to regard as being for the specialist only; "the penalty of remaining a layman is that at times one must accept a specialist's opinion," as Ezra Pound says, and it is through an experience such as that provided by these Troubadour Songs a general listener may be stimulated to search out other beauties of the same genre, much as Arnold Dolmetsch left his mathematics and science for a crusade in the cause of early music. What strikes one with French poetry and painting is its continuity, and similar feelings are aroused by the inevitability of this music. Although it has been resuscitated and perforce arranged to some extent, still it appears as music for all time; it is, in fact, life, and contains the sum of all experience, in the same manner that Vaughan Williams's Fourth and Fifth Symphonies, taken together, do.

The Troubadours were the poet-musicians of southern France who sang in Provençal from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. They always set their lyrics to music, but only some three hundred melodies have been preserved as against the words of over two thousand five hundred songs; the music is purely melodic, written upon four staves in Plainsong notation. The specialists' opinions vary as to how the songs should be arranged, for there is no indication of either rhythm or of the accompanying instruments employed. The arrangements used on this occasion were by Dr. Wellesz (published by the O.U.P.), and seemed eminently satisfactory. The names of four hundred and sixty

troubadours are known, poems by the majority of these are extant, and melodies by at least forty-one are available. Bernart of Ventadorn, who is thought to have visited the Court of Henry II, died in 1195, and is considered the finest poet; forty-five of his poems and nineteen of his extremely beautiful melodies have survived.

It is not often that one comes across a composer whose music makes an impression at a first hearing, and who is not mentioned in any of the standard works of reference. At an admirable concert of Chamber Music given by the Aeolian String Quartet and Frederick Fuller accompanied by Daniel Kelly, String Quartet No. 1 by Eva Ruth Spalding was heard. The programme note informed us that she has written two Quartets, and that this one is dedicated to Leopold Auer, with whom she studied in St. Petersburg, and which was first performed "some years ago by the Mangeot Quartet." Looking up Auer, one finds that Tschaikovsky wrote his Violin Concerto for him, that he was an eminent violinist in solo and concerto work, that he has written a number of works, and that amongst others Elman, Heifetz, and Menges were his pupils. He certainly taught Eva Spalding the intricacies of string quartet writing. In four movements, the Quartet is a forceful, dramatic and closely knit work; a fundamentally serious essay, obviously the result of intense thought and a mature craftsmanship. The Quartet, and four Songs (Crawshaw, Hardy, Henley, and Whitman) beautifully interpreted by Frederick Fuller, proved extremely interesting music, and although the personal idiom of the composer may not appeal to all, one has no hesitation in recommending to serious listeners this contrapuntal and integrated Quartet.

In some ways one felt Eva Spalding's handling of the instruments of the string quartet to be more mature than the way in which William Walton deals with the same instruments in his First String Quartet; Spalding knows every move in that particular game, whereas with Walton, who quite obviously knows the idiosyncrasies of each instrument—witness the Viola and Violin Concertos—the Quartet as an entity is not perhaps entirely satisfactory. It would be most interesting to hear these two works and Bloch's Second Quartet (unnecessarily neglected since its first performance by the Grillers in the autumn of 1946) in the same

concert. Undoubtedly Walton's Quartet in A minor is important as a piece of music, and as his first major composition since 1939. It has been possible to hear it in London three times: a first performance was given on "the Third" one Sunday evening, followed by a second, public, performance the next evening, and played on both occasions by the Blech Quartet; it was given later by the Philharmonia Quartet in the Wigmore Hall. The first and third movements are extended, the second and fourth of a slighter nature. In the first movement, after a calm introduction, there is a "choppy" passage reminiscent of the Violin Concerto and particularly attractive is the ending of this movement, an inverted pedal, with a recurrence of the earlier rhythm under it, followed by a simple *pizzicato* chord; the very short cross-rhythmed Scherzo is curiously un-English and, with the repetition of one note predominating, of great intensity. The extended and sombre third movement contains a memorable passage, in which a melody on the violin and viola is played against a *pizzicato* accompaniment on the off-beat; the last movement has a short terse rhythm seemingly connected with the first movement, and reiterated single-note passages, perhaps referring back to the second movement; a well-thought-out crescendo then leads the music into a dramatic and effective conclusion of rapidly repeated notes and a tremendous final *pizzicato*.

For eight glorious weeks each year England is a musical nation, and music is of "news value," as the Press, advertisement hoardings, concert agencies and, of course, the B.B.C. testify. Once again the delirious Henry Wood Promenade Concerts, with their carotic programmes, are in full swing; however little the applause-exhibitionism of the audience changed, this season was an important one from the point of view of the orchestral player and the general standard of performance. The arduous nightly duties were evened out among the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the London Symphony Orchestra; whilst the three conductors (shades of Sir Henry), Boult, Cameron and Sargent, had the services of an associate, Stanford Robinson; the improvement in the standard of playing was marked, and there were some very fine performances indeed.

With such startling changes in the performers, one might well have expected corresponding and equally important changes in the general layout and adventurousness of the programmes; instead, they were distinguished only for their conventional nature and timidity of content. What new works there were—nauseatingly described as “novelties”—had very little to recommend them.

Haydn's *Concerto per l'Organo* was no surprise; dating from 1756, the score was prepared from the orchestral parts discovered in the library of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna. It is a charming work with great vitality, and was gracefully played by Susie Jeans. There are some works which, despite years of concert going, one has always missed, and which the variegated programmes of the Proms finally give one the opportunity of hearing. Such a work, for me, was Elgar's *The Music Makers*, not particularly well sung by the Alexandra Choir; it proved a dull and self-derivative work which one could not possibly wish ever to hear again. But that could not be said of Hely-Hutchinson's *Symphony* for small orchestra, which received its first London performance. No doubt many of those who knew Hely-Hutchinson as an administrator only, expected little of this music, and therefore received little; it is so easy to allow one's preconceived ideas of a man to bias the idea of that man in a different sphere of activity. In this work he displayed great competence in writing for a small orchestra tuneful and dramatic music, perhaps “operatic” at times, but extremely well put together. There is, for example, the effective piano “link” of the second movement to the scherzo-like and strongly rhythmical third movement with its “moorish” tune; Brahms is the most discernible influence in this movement, and there was what sounded like a deliberate quotation from Variation 8 of the St. Antonii Variations in the last movement.

Hely-Hutchinson was a specialist in the theoretical side of music, and when he turned to the immense labour of writing music he, to use the rest of my Ezra Pound quotation, did not “take the trouble to become a specialist for the mere pleasure of ramming his *ipse dixit* down the general throat.” Would that some of the more tedious of creative artists and their disciples were also of that school.

# NORTHERN DIARY

SCOTLAND: MAURICE LINDSAY



SUMMER music-making in Scotland has been more extensive this year than ever before. The Scottish Orchestra, under Walter Susskind, gave a season of twice-weekly concerts in St. Andrews halls and in various other towns from June to August. The programmes were more varied than those of the winter concerts, although in both cases there was a conspicuous absence of contemporary music. John McQuaid's *Symphonic Studies* was the only new work by a Scottish composer to worm its way into the august company of the older masters.

The summer season, however, was not very well supported. For this, the Management Committee has largely itself to blame. Instead of immediately following up the highly successful winter concerts—successful, at any rate, from the financial point of view—with the summer series, the Committee allowed a gap of two months to elapse, during which time audiences fell away, and the public's concert-going momentum ran down. In any case, it should be fairly obvious to anyone who is familiar with conditions in Glasgow and Edinburgh that April and May are much better concert-giving months than July and August. This experiment towards permanency, therefore, can hardly be regarded as a fair one. Next summer, it is to be hoped that the Management Committee will profit from its experiences this year, and run the two series of concerts without a break.

The trouble is that the Management Committee has given the impression again and again that it is not really in favour of a permanent Scottish Orchestra. The consequence is that its actions so often seem half-hearted. This could be said even of its attitude to the Edinburgh Concert Society, with whom it fought a "battle" during the heat of the summer.

For years, the Edinburgh Concert Society has "hired" the

"Scottish" to give concerts in the Capital. These concerts have resulted in the accumulation of a profit to the E.C.S., although the guarantors of the orchestra throughout Scotland have had to meet an annual deficit—clearly an unfair and an unsound arrangement. Because of the unwillingness of the E.C.S. to pay a higher fee for its concerts next winter, made necessary by increases in wages and in general costs, it looked as if the central Management Committee were going to run their own concerts in the Capital, with the E.C.S. running a rival series, employing another orchestra. But the quarrel has been patched up, and the earlier arrangement reverted to. In many ways, this is a disappointing solution, for by perpetuating an old and unjustifiable system, it puts the moment when we can have a truly national Scottish symphony orchestra, serving the country in accordance with economic demand, a little further away.

The new public, athirst for music, is just as strong in Scotland as in the Megalopolis and the English provinces. Unfortunately, they are, if anything, even more pathetically unable to distinguish between a good performance and a bad one than their English counterparts. The result is that the audiences which attend the "Scottish's" concerts applaud with unvarying vigour at the end of every work. Usually a noisy ending is taken to mean an extra-special triumph for both orchestra and conductor, and gives rise to bursts of feet-stamping and cheering.

Now, it is doubtless very flattering to Mr. Susskind to know that whatever he does his audiences will applaud enthusiastically. But it is very disturbing to those of us who have the interests of music seriously at heart. Because of the moribund state of Scottish musical criticism, the audiences no doubt feel that they have a certain backing. True, Scotland's principal music-critic, Stewart Deas, of the *Scotsman*, has been unmercifully frank in commenting upon such performances as were painfully inadequate; and in my own humbler sphere I have tried to be honest and fair. But taken by and large, Scottish criticism consists of gentle, meaningless praise. It is not even interesting to read. Week after week, the same dreary, journalistic clichés appear, droning phrases calculated to give neither offence nor information.

Parochial obliviousness cannot be wholly to blame, for we have had summer visits from the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Beecham, and the Hallé under Barbirolli. Whatever the cause, the disease is alarming, for until the standard of the "Scottish" improves, Scotland is simply not on the musical map, so far as executive orchestral ability goes. All too often the strings are ragged, and intonation is doubtful. The tone of the lower brass instruments is strident in the extreme, whilst the horns are not always equal to even the older composers' demands. This sort of thing is simply not good enough. Mr. Susskind has worked hard with the "Scottish," and he has secured many good individual performances. But he has shown himself resentful of adverse criticism.

A club has been formed amongst the supporters of the "Scottish" to increase interest in orchestral music. Its constitution makes one wonder if the healthy air of criticism will be allowed to blow through its meetings at all. Mr. Susskind has been elected its first president, so he will have a great chance to stimulate true musical appreciation in Glasgow. But one cannot serve two masters, and if the chance is not to be wasted, he will have to uphold the highest standards of his art and not the standards of the present "Scottish."

Permanency is the key to an improved orchestra. As we enter upon Edinburgh's first International Festival, it may not be too much to hope that the orchestras which will be heard in the Capital during these autumn weeks will stimulate a widespread and determined desire for emulation.

#### LIVERPOOL: A. K. HOLLAND

The dullest season of the year in these provinces is normally that which lies around the summer months. At such times the musicians would in the old days betake themselves to some pleasant seaside resort and, as it were, combine business with pleasure, playing on piers, in "winter" gardens and such places. Nowadays they are all busily engaged on a full-time basis, and

have to go where they are told. The orchestra must be kept in being.

So we don't hear much about the Philharmonic Orchestra in the summer months, here in Liverpool. But we do have, round about July, a sort of pseudo-Promenade week, dedicated to the "Man in the Street." And these eight concerts, all of which were conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, are a boon to tired city dwellers and pleasant enough in the familiar popular vein. Unfortunately, all sorts of touring companies contrived to descend upon Liverpool round about the same time, and after a very barren period, we suddenly had the Carl Rosa, the Sadler's Wells Company, and the International Ballet, all tumbling over each other in quick succession. Needless to say, four weeks of opera, even if it contained very little that was new or original, was rather a godsend after the unadulterated orchestral fare that we get for so many months of the year. We were all so grateful for this operatic diversion that we could put up with even the most hackneyed of repertoires.

Otherwise, it was the season of stock-taking and annual figures. The Philharmonic reported a loss of about £2,500 on the year's working. Rising orchestral costs, the increased demands of soloists, and the inadequacy of the Arts Council grants to cover the losses on concerts away from home, were the contributory factors in this state of insolvency. The problem that we have yet to face is whether the whole-time orchestra, with an all-the-year-round contract, is a feasible proposition for a provincial city. We have lost much of the special war-time work that was sponsored by E.N.S.A., and we have failed in some instances to get the agreement of outlying townships to guarantee concerts of a necessarily uneconomic nature. On the other hand, the growth of educational efforts has persuaded some of the more enlightened boroughs to employ the orchestra for school concerts. The situation is therefore one of some delicacy, and it will be reflected in the rather more cautious tone of the programmes for the new season.

Meanwhile, the first steps have been taken towards the formation of a Liverpool College of Music. The City is not actually ill-equipped in teaching facilities, though a number of its students

have always gravitated to Manchester. The new scheme contemplates a college somewhat on the lines of the Royal Manchester College, in which representatives of the University, the Corporation, and the Philharmonic Society shall form the governing body. Co-operation with outlying districts is to be sought. Apart from teaching facilities, one of the first benefits that we may hope to reap is no doubt the encouragement of a school of instrumental playing which will ultimately prove a source of supply to the Philharmonic Orchestra.

At the moment the problem of orchestral personnel is one which has its headaches. Some of our best war-time players have inevitably left us for more profitable pastures. We have recently lost David Wise, the leader of the orchestra, and he has been replaced by Manoug Parikian. There are also several changes in the leadership of other departments. Nevertheless, this process of change need not produce a deterioration in the orchestra, if it is wisely directed and encourages the discovery of new talent.

In the close season for music there is very little to record in the way of concerts, and those of us who have to follow the sun drift into various festivals and occasions which make up for the lack of home-events. The International Eisteddfod at Llangollen, which fell on my beat, was one of the liveliest of events. It was the first of its kind. Choirs came, often with the greatest difficulty of travel, from far-away countries in Europe—Hungary, Italy, Denmark, Holland, Portugal. They competed in the spirit of a Welsh Eisteddfod, and were adjudicated mostly by Welsh judges. For tests they had usually a Latin motet, a piece in their own tongue and an English or Welsh piece. The difficulty of finding a common denominator was felt throughout, for national standards inevitably differ. But the competitions were of great interest, and if the redoubtable Sale Choir carried off the chief mixed voice contest, everyone could congratulate the brilliant Hungarian Workers' Choir on its success in the Male Voice Competition, which surprisingly drew no Welsh entry. The solo competitions were less satisfactory, and the standard was by no means what one had the right to expect from such an event. The most amusing event was the dancing of a troupe of Spaniards, men and women,

who very nearly walked off with the festival, with their gay and seductive folk-dancing.

### MANCHESTER: J. H. ELLIOT

I write on a day of broiling heat—these cracks about Manchester's incessant bad weather are unjust: we rarely have rain for more than eleven months in the year—and we are still tingling with the news of a spectacular victory at Old Trafford; moreover, a glance at the championship table comfortably assures us that, for once, we need have no fear about our position therein relative to that of our deadly rivals of the White Rose. Thus (though not without some slight sensation of magnanimity) I am prepared to concede that the real centre of the much-vaunted northern choralism lies rather to our east—and especially in the West Riding of our broad-acred neighbour. In fact, to come right down to it; we have to admit that for some decades Manchester as a whole has shown no great enthusiasm for choral music.

Pre-war, a choral night at the Hallé almost connoted a sparsely inhabited Free Trade Hall. The sole exception was the annual December performance of *Messiah*; and even that was a curious sort of occasion, for the "regulars" seemed to vanish in a body—retiring, as it were, before invading foreign hosts armed to the teeth with vocal scores. I usually fled at the interval, having felt like an intruder up to the traditional break at "Lift up your heads." But even the long-standing repeat performance on the following evening had to be abandoned during the 'thirties. "How is it," asked someone at an annual Hallé meeting, "that there is to be no second performance of *Messiah* this season?" "Because," replied the chairman, "it was such a ghastly failure last year." Ichabod, indeed. Nor was it only the Hallé records that underlined Manchester's apathy where choral music was concerned. I recall a Municipal Concert (and, by the by, there is as yet no sign that this series will be resurrected—and I trust that there won't be until the Corporation is prepared to take a bold line and do the thing generously, with no nonsense about a reduced orchestra) when the Choral Symphony was given and the

choir sang, *inter alia* of course, "O ye millions, I embrace ye!" to rows of empty seats.

Perhaps things are a little more heartening for choral enthusiasts in these post-war times, though one can still detect traces of the traditional Mancunian bias against choralism. We hear little about some of our choral bodies these days, and before the war we had more than a few who gave regular if neither frequent nor well-attended concerts. True, the Hallé Choir still flourishes, and it now has Herbert Bardgett as chorus master; in fact, it has actually given, for Hallé Club members, a purely vocal concert. (Apropos, I rather wished there had been less that cried out for the absent orchestra; but one can't have everything, and I was more than grateful for that exquisite "Blue Bird" of Stanford.) Apart from *Messiah*, however, the chorus emerged only twice in the 1946-47 season proper, when it did well in *Gerontius* and Berlioz's *Faust*. If there were faults, they were the blemishes of British choralism generally—which is, if I may thus express myself, so confoundedly respectable. After *Faust* I made a memorandum to remind me, in the event of my becoming a millionaire impresario, to try out certain experiments with the choir elected to portray the convivial students, the legions of hell, and other fauna chorally conceived by Berlioz's unique imagination. A tot of rum, perhaps, before going over the top. . . .

However, this week of exciting news has also brought in a relevant musical item. A cutting before me records a National Eisteddfod triumph—the highest available—by the Sale and District Choir and its seventy-six-year-old conductor, Alfred Higson. Some explanation is necessary. Sale is indubitably in Cheshire, but if I were to proceed from my present location, which is indisputably in Manchester, Lancs, I could, after fifteen minutes' brisk walk, set foot in Sale; so I hereby claim the choir for Manchester. After all, there is much virtue in that "and District," and in any case the Sale Choir has delighted Manchester audiences on many occasions—notably in performances some months ago of Mozart's *Requiem*. My cutting tells me that this is the choir's ninety-ninth competitive success. I hope that the century will have been scored by the time these lines appear, though I am bound to say that I

care less about these silver pots and other trophies than I do for the sterling record of forty years served by the choir in the best traditions of British amateur choralism. So, as a considerable item on the credit side of our balance-sheet, I take leave to post up the achievements of this admirable musical society. Perhaps after all a new day is dawning in these parts for singers who sing in chorus. We shall see.

Plans for 1947-8 are not, at the moment of writing, available for discussion. But there is one thing in particular that I want to say about the Hallé programmes generally, and may as well say now. In the second issue of this magazine, John Barbirolli told us something of the difficulty of devising programmes; and wasn't it Clara Schumann who said that it was easy to give a recital, but exceedingly difficult to decide what to play? Anyhow, I want to pay special tribute to Mr. Barbirolli's extraordinary skill in programme-building (the rest of his attainments need no underlining). The truly beautiful poise of his programmes—emphasised, I may add, entirely without offence, by the declension from it noticeable when some of our guest conductors step in for a moment—is something to marvel at, especially when we study the subtle difference between the Albert Hall series in the city and the equally admirable, though avowedly more popular, "parallel season" at Belle Vue.

Far be it from me to deny that Manchester is without its drawbacks, but—well, let it rain. We still have the Hallé.

#### BIRMINGHAM: JOHN WATERHOUSE

The tail of our 1946-7 musical season has not wagged with any notable vigour except at the City of Birmingham Orchestra's Promenade Concerts. These genial affairs, among whose special amenities the presence of a bar in the basement must be treasured above the somewhat limited (and apparently not much sought after) facilities for promenading as such, are a sort of popular July supplement to the regular Thursday and Sunday concerts, which end in June. The success of an experimental fortnight last year was

followed up by an equally successful three weeks (nineteen concerts) this time, and the much-taxed energies of George Weldon were relieved by occasional skilled assistance from Harold Gray as deputy conductor. These concerts being largely designed to recruit more supporters for the orchestra, the programmes have consisted for the most part of popular standard works, though Elgar's First Symphony and Sibelius's Seventh have been included, and Walton's *Sinfonia Concertante* would have been but for the indisposition of Phyllis Sellick.

A critic who had heard most of the pieces at least twice earlier in the season may be forgiven for having been only an occasional visitor. But the orchestra appears to have kept in touch with the very high standard which it has set for itself in recent months. The popular "Prom." spirit tempts towards exuberance in matters of sound and speed; but there is no evidence that this exuberance has strayed into the danger-zone of vulgarising the taste which is being encouraged; and the unexpected discharge of some sort of small firearm, by the principal bassoonist in the *1812 Overture*, must be counted an agreeable diversion.

Concerning the splendid standard which the orchestra again and again reaches nowadays, there can be no doubt at all. Looking back over the season as a whole, perhaps the most memorable single performance was of Vaughan Williams's Fifth Symphony (now established in the twice-a-year repertoire, and clearly popular) on June 6—a performance wherein Mr. Weldon's extremely sensitive and understanding direction was matched by impeccable playing in all sections. One-time impressions that our admirable conductor's powers were predominantly inclined towards the opulent and the emotionally supercharged were finally deleted by this performance. It is most welcome recent news that he has accepted a contract for another two years.

Orchestral programmes for the autumn are not yet available at the time of writing, though pleasing rumours of a more adventurous policy are flying around. One promise of the future, in another field, gives cause for rejoicing. Despite the past season's dismal record of all-but-empty houses for chamber concerts, the Ridgdowne Music Club is evidently undefeatable. It has an-

nounced for the autumn a four-concert "Schubert Festival" which, backboned by the Philharmonia quartet, will include all the mature chamber works except the Octet, and also five of the early quartets. And a regular supply of good concerts is assured at the Barber Institute, where Professor Anthony Lewis, since his entry to the University chair of music last January, has followed in full measure Professor Westrup's vigorous example. A Barber Concert in June included the masque from Purcell's *Tempest* and Handel's cantata *Apollo and Daphne*. Soon afterwards the end-of-term concert of the University Musical Society crowded into a single hour Boyce's seventh little symphony, Brahms' songs for women's voices, horns, and harp, a Handel oboe concerto, two Mozart arias, Debussy's Dances for harp and strings, and Vaughan Williams's *Windsor Forest*.

The only other event demanding special mention was the excellent production of Rutland Boughton's *Alkestis* by the Midland Institute School of Music. If it did not succeed in proving that the work is a neglected masterpiece, it gave abundant testimony to the gathering energy, enterprise, and efficiency of the Birmingham music school.

# DESULTORIA

N. L. SMITH



The "desultory" horseman, if the dictionary is to be trusted, does not try to get anywhere; he merely shows off in the circus-ring, leaping from bare-back to bare-back.

THOSE recapitulations! Mr. Gerald Abraham, in his *This Modern Stuff*, calls it barbarous butchery to omit the repeat in the first movement of Beethoven's *Pathétique*. Donald Tovey, on the other hand, normally a fundamentalist as regards the jots and tittles of the text, after casually remarking that Beethoven himself on this occasion absent-mindedly forgot to indicate how far back the repeat should go, adds that nothing is lost and something gained by carrying straight on to the G minor passage. Apparently you pays your money and you takes your choice.



In the matter of recapitulations generally, Rorke, in his *Musical Pilgrim's Progress*, rather apologetically suggests that the dramatic reality is sometimes knocked out by such a break in the emotional continuity; to which Dr. Ernest Walker adds a pregnant footnote—"Many modern musicians feel a certain rebelliousness at recapitulation as . . . an anti-emotional feature in a scheme. I personally do not, though in many ways I am an ultra-modernist."



What a pity, by the way, if that delightful book of Rorke's has gone out of print (my copy is dated 1921). Even though the listeners of to-day tend to the passive rôle of letting music (as Plato once put it) "drip into the ears as if through a funnel," and few (pace Professor Joad) take their daily exercise on a pianola, the *Pilgrim's Progress* continues to be a feast of good things.



Talking of the *Pathétique*, I suppose that every church-goer knows that the second movement of that Sonata (*Adagio Cantabile*) is the foundation of a rather beautiful chant usually headed "After Beethoven." How many realise the following? The highlight of the chant in question is undoubtedly the last chord before the third double-bar, in which a good time is especially had by every village tenor in the land. Now if the chant is transposed into the Beethoven key of A flat major, that chord comes out as C natural and G flat in the left hand, and B flat and E flat in the right hand. On the other hand, if you unscramble the Beethoven passage, you will find no trace of the tenor's delight, namely G flat, but merely the pedestrian chord C natural E flat below and A flat above.

\* \* \*

Some years ago, when a friend was Chopin-browsing and came to the end of the middle portion of the so-called *Raindrop* Prelude, the third occupant of the room (allegedly non-musical) looked up from the patience he was playing or the book he was reading and asked casually whether that last thing was the *Erlkönig*. It is not easy to imagine two more disparate pictures than the distracted father of Goethe's poem riding wild-eyed through the darkness and George Sand (if the legend is true) preparing to unfurl an elegant *parapluie*. But curiously enough there are certain remarkable affinities which everyone sufficiently interested can readily work out. This is not to suggest that there is any likelihood of conscious plagiarism of the Schubert song.

\* \* \*

To-day's Bach quiz. Where, in the Forty-eight, will you find a different key-signature for a major key and its relative minor? Answer: Nos. 3 and 22 in both Part I and Part II; also Nos. 13 and 8 in Part I only (in Part II he sticks to six sharps for both 13 and 8).

\* \* \*

The walled city of Pampluna, in North Spain, has many centuries of creditable history, but in the summer of 1908 its burghers remembered nothing except the honour of having been the birthplace in 1844 of the violinist-composer Sarasate. After a

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